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THE WORK LIFE OF A SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Laurel, for her love and support; and to Peter who let me have a glimpse of his life.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Abstract

THE WORK LIFE OF A SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Department of Educational Policy Studies

The purpose of this study was to describe the work life of the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent at the centre of the undertaking was "Peter", the Chief Education Officer for the Board of Trustees of the Glengarry School District. The study was conducted over one period of time sufficient to provide a picture of the work life of the superintendent in a school district.

Data for this study were collected through direct observation of the participant in his work place. Additional data were gathered from document searches and interviews.

The findings indicate that the work life of a superintendent of schools consistently demonstrates the roles of information gatherer, information disseminator, defender, decision-maker, negotiator, spokesman, and cheerleader and flag bearer. The findings also indicate that these roles are interconnected. The work life of the superintendent is dominated by interaction and communication with many other people. The findings also point to the continual and varied interaction of people and information.

The findings point to a work life where there is a constant struggle between the personal values, beliefs, and life and the demands of the work. The superintendent also is required to adapt to a great deal of diversity in the work life. Another finding of the research pointed out the need to control emotions in the position.

A number of implications were drawn from the study that could inform practitioners in the field of the superintendency and those concerned with the preparation of professionals for careers in the position.

Research is warranted in the area of the use of intuitive knowledge by superintendents in decision-making. Further exploration of the work life of individual superintendents at different career stages, in other jurisdictions, might expand the understanding of the role of the superintendent. Similarly, a focussed investigation of the impact of the office on the personal lives of the incumbents might lead to valuable insights.

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Table of Contents

Chapter Page

1. INTRODUCTION 1

Statement of Purpose 1
General Research Question 2
Research Questions 2
Significance of the Study 2
Limitations 5
Delimitations 5
Definitions 5
The Researcher 6
Organisation of the Thesis 8

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 10

Introduction 10
Legal Definitions 10
Recent History of the Superintendency 11
Role of the Superintendent 15
The Superintendent's role in relation to the Board 15
The Superintendent's role in relation to the System 20
The Superintendent's role in relation to the Community 24
Studies of the Superintendency 25
Theoretical Framework 29
Summary 30

3. RESEARCH DESIGN 32

Methodology 32
Locating the Participant 33
Conducting the Study 34
Establishing Trustworthiness 37
Gathering the Data – The Fieldwork 40
Analysing the Data 42

Chapter Page

Ethical Considerations 42
Summary 43

4. GLENGARRY SCHOOL DISTRICT CONTEXT 45

Introduction 45
The Glengarry School District 45
Board of Trustees 46
Board Chair 47
The Reeve 48
Other Trustees 48
The Three Influential Trustees 49
The Organisational Structure of the Glengarry School District 50
The Superintendent's Team 51
Glengarry School District Central Offices 53
Glengarry Education and Municipal Offices 53
Peter's Personal Office 54
A Typical Day 57
A Board Meeting 59
Summmary 62

5. SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE 66

Introduction 66
The Roles 66
Identifying the Roles 66
Information Gatherer 67
The Senior Official of the Department of Education 67
The Regional Superintendent's Meeting 69
A Telephone Conversation with the Board Chair 72
Information Disseminator 73
"If I were a betting man..." 73
Policy Interpretation 75
Priority of Information Dissemination 76
Decision-maker 77
The Board Meeting 77

Chapter Page

The Superintendent's Team 79
The Strategic Planning Meeting 80
Defender 81
The Assistant Superintendent 82
A Principal 83
Negotiator 84
Spokesman 86
Cheerleader and Flagbearer 90
Discussion of the Roles 93
Synthesis of the Themes 94
Summary 96

6. CONCLUSIONS 97

Introduction 97
Summary of the Findings 97
The Roles 97
Information Gatherer 97
Information Disseminator 98
Defender 98
Negotiator 98
Spokesman 98
Cheerleader and Flagbearer 98
The Research Questions 99
What is the work life of a Superintendent of schools? 99
What activities and interactions form the substance of the work life of the Superintendent of Schools? 100
What does it mean to be a Superintendent of Schools and Chief Executive Officer of the Board? 100
What roles characterise the work life of the Superintendent of Schools as the Chief Executive Officer of the Board? 101
Conclusions and Implications for Practice 101
Implications for Research 102
Concluding Comments 104

REFERENCES 105

Chapter Page

APPENDIX A 113

A Typical Day 112

APPENDIX B 124

A Typical Board Meeting 125

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Study

A superintendent of schools in Alberta is the Chief Executive Officer of the Board of Trustees in a school jurisdiction. The role the superintendent plays in the governance of education and the educational process in a jurisdiction makes the position one of central importance to the understanding of education in Alberta schools.

Superintendents of schools are the formal leaders of their jurisdictions by virtue of the position they occupy in the hierarchy of the organization. The superintendent is also an individual who brings to the position all the foibles and strengths of any human being. An understanding of the nature of the role and of the individual who occupies the position of Superintendent is necessary if one is to understand the governance of education in Alberta.

This study focused on the activities and interactions of a single Superintendent of Schools in the Province of Alberta. The intent was to describe the activities of a single individual occupying a position as Superintendent of Schools. This position is that of Chief Executive Officer or Chief Education Officer (CEO) of a school jurisdiction.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the work life of the Superintendent of Schools as Chief Education Officer for the Board of Trustees of a particular School District through one period of time: thereby providing a picture of the work life of the superintendent in a school district. The study intent was to describe the work life of the

Superintendent of Schools through close observation of the daily work activities carried out by the superintendent. This study was conducted just prior to a major restructuring of education in the Province of Alberta and so provided a description of the role at that time.

The central focus of the Chief Education Officer's work life is the Board of Trustees and the activities that extend from the Board as a corporate body. This study examined the work life of the CEO over a period of five months.

General Research Question

The major question the guided this study was "What is the work life of a superintendent of schools?"

Research Questions

The general research question had several sub questions that emerged as the study progressed. These questions were:

1. What activities frame the work life of a superintendent?
2. What interactions form the substance of the Superintendent's work life?
3. What does it mean to be a Superintendent of Schools and Chief Executive Officer of the Board?
4. What roles characterize the work life of the Superintendent as the Chief Executive Officer of the Board?

Significance of the Study

Many researchers have pointed to the need for more and deeper studies of the work life of superintendents. Bridges (1982) stated:

> A superintendent stands at the apex of the organizational pyramid in education and manages a multi-million dollar enterprise,

> charged with the moral and technical socialization of youth, aged 1-18. Despite the importance of this administrative role to education and society, less than a handful of studies analyzed in this review [of 322 research reports from dissertation abstracts and published journals] investigated the impact of the chief executive officer. This topic merits both reflection and empirical examination since nothing of consequence is known about the impact of the occupants of this role. (p. 26)

The role of the superintendent of schools is a complex and not well understood. Allison (1989) suggested that further research of the role of the superintendent of schools is necessary.

> The findings and explanatory images discussed suggest that the studies of chief school officers yield particularly powerful insights into the administration of school systems. As such, further and more detailed examinations of the work and work environment of chief school officers would appear worthwhile. (p. 306)

Anderson (1990) noted that "Accounts are urgently needed that describe how administrators attempt to manage their realities." (p. 51) Furthermore, Housego (1991) pointed out that "those who are the most powerful have their way with respect to the imposition of values in the group, in the community, in the society, in the organization" (p. 19). This made the study of the work life of an incumbent in the role of superintendent of schools worthy of examination.

The research providing insights into the work life of the superintendent of schools is still very limited. Most studies deal in some way with the aggregating of a number of superintendents into groups and analyzing the resulting data using a predetermined conceptual framework. Effectiveness (Genge, 1991), role definition (Braithwaite, 1988; Green, 1988), career patterns (Van der Linde, 1988), conflict management (McMillan, 1994), entry to the position (Chapman, 1997),

challenges of the role (Johnson, 1996; Murphy, 1994; Wendel, 1994), progressivism (Witcher, 1996), exemplify the variety of research topics with a focus on the superintendent.

Recently researchers have been beginning to study the individual superintendent and his or her work. Fenwick (1996) studied the decisions made by an interim superintendent. Gulka (1993) reported on the roles of three Directors of Education in managing change. Millard (1998) described the perspectives of leaders in educational change.

Crowson (1987) noted that "The local school district superintendency remains a puzzling administrative position in education, still receiving relatively little study" (p. 64). Murphy and Hallinger (1986) pointed out that "research on the superintendency is remarkably thin, while research on the leadership role of the superintendency is sparser still" (p. 214). Crowson and Morris (1990) indicated that "there has been surprisingly little inquiry into how superintendents handle the internal organizational affairs of their school districts" (p. 7). Leithwood and Musella (1991) commented that the virtual absence of attention to this topic by scholars until recently is dismaying.

The findings of this study may provide insights into the behavior of superintendents of schools as they carry out their daily work activities. The recommendations may give practitioners insight into the work life of the superintendent of schools. The recommendations may provide guidance to design of professional development activities for individuals seeking to occupy the role of the superintendent of schools. Finally, the study provides an historical description of the status of the

superintendent of schools in Alberta prior to a period of restructuring of educational organizations in the province.

Limitations

Several limitations restricted the scope of this study:

1. The nature of the relationship that evolves between the participant and the researcher limited the depth of understanding.

2. The length of time spent with the participant meant that significant events in the work life of the superintendent fell outside the time of the study.

3. The need of the school system to protect documentation or limit the researcher's access to documents or meetings limited the study.

4. The ability of the researcher to understand the data acquired during the study is a limitation of all qualitative studies. A researcher cannot know everything about the subject.

5. The data were limited in the ability to convey tone of voice or body language that gave so much meaning to the observer.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to only a single superintendent of schools in the Province of Alberta during the time period of February fourth to June 15, 1994. Transferability of the conclusions to other superintendents, to other school jurisdictions, or to other time periods should be made with caution.

Definitions

The study used the following definitions in the course of the analysis:

Superintendent. Refers to the chief executive officer (CEO) or chief education officer of the school jurisdiction.

School board. Refers to the Board of Trustees of the jurisdiction as a corporate body.

Trustee. Refers to an elected member of the school board.

Work life. Refers to the daily interactions that occur as a result of a person occupying a particular position in an organization. Blumberg (1985) defined the work life of the superintendent of schools as "the human experience of being a superintendent" (p. xiv).

The Researcher

Because in this study I am the collector and interpreter of the data it is necessary to describe briefly my professional background. My beliefs, values, and assumptions about the superintendency, are important in ensuring the data have been fairly presented in this report.

When I entered the teaching profession in 1972, I expected to become a career person. To me that meant moving "up the ladder" to a vice-principalship, then to various principalships, and continuing to central office. For the most part this has been my career path as I am currently the principal of a medium sized high school (9-12). I have not worked in the central office of any school division to date. Therefore I have only the outsider's view of the daily and ongoing activities of a school system office.

In my working life I have held that integrity and honesty must control decisions made by school administrators. Educational administrators make decisions about the use of resources and make these decisions based upon what is best for students. The decisions

have to be made with integrity and communicated honestly to stakeholders and those affected by the decisions. These beliefs were ones that I have applied to the role of the superintendent as well.

I recognized that the decisions of the superintendent are constrained by the political nature of the position. As a Principal I am able to support a superintendent who is honest and has the integrity to make decisions based upon what was best for education of students. My personal experience in working with over seven superintendents during my career has shown that some superintendents were more capable of this than others. This personal experience also gave rise to my judging superintendent success or effectiveness based on my own values of integrity and honesty.

Because the study required a general understanding of the context in which the study took place, and the observed events were ongoing after the study period, I maintained contact in order to ensure the observations made at the time remained accurate. The qualitative study has some degree of subjectivity. I selected some data and not others. These were choices that I made. It is quite likely that, as with the selection of the literature, other researchers would select differently. I did attempt to ensure that what was selected from the data represented the reality of the work done by the participant superintendent through repeated visiting of the transcripts and notes.

The interview data were reviewed and discussed with the participant to attempt to ensure data was accurate. The initial drafts of the study were read and had input from members of my committee. Further, I requested review and input from two superintendents, one

retired and one currently practicing, to determine if my study results "rang true" to them in light of their own experiences.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the study, a statement of the purpose, presentation of the research questions used to guide the study, a discussion of the significance of the study, the limitations and delimitation's of the study, and the key definitions used in the study. The chapter also addresses some of the researcher's background and motivation for the conducting of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relevant to the superintendent of schools. The literature review examines the legal position of the superintendent of schools, recent history of the superintendency, and an overview of the superintendent of schools as a position in school organizations. Literature regarding the role of the school superintendent is included.

Chapter 3 presents an explanation of the research design and methodology used in the study. The chapter outlines the locating of the participant and the establishment of trustworthiness. The method used for data collection and analysis is described and the chapter identifies the ethical considerations pertinent to the study.

Chapter 4 presents data collected describing the school district and its operation. The Board of Trustees, the Board Chair, the Reeve and other trustees are introduced and a general description of the physical environment of the school district is provided. The chapter presents detailed descriptions of a typical day and a typical Board meeting.

Chapter 5 presents data that emerged from the observation of the participant. This chapter identifies roles played by the superintendent that developed as the observations were analyzed. These roles served as a framework for describing work life in this portion of the study.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of the findings of the study and answers the research questions that guided the study. It presents the conclusions of the study. The chapter also includes implications for practice and suggestions for further research.

Appendices A and B provide detailed records of the typical day and the typical Board meeting. The reader may wish to review these to gain a deeper understanding of the participant.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The review of the literature was designed to establish background information about the superintendency in Canada. A final ERIC search done late in 1999 indicated 1355 articles using the key word "superintendent" since 1988. This large number of articles and papers dealing with the superintendency mostly related to the position as it existed in the United States rather than Canada. For a study of this nature I decided to incorporate some material from the United States but to attempt to keep the primary focus on the Canadian superintendency. The areas selected for review were (a) the legal position of the superintendent in Alberta; (b) the recent history of the superintendency; (c) an overview of studies about the superintendency as a position; and, finally, (d) literature about the role of the superintendent in the school system organization.

Legal Definitions

The position of superintendent of schools and the relationship of the superintendent and the school board were governed by legal definitions in the Province of Alberta. According to the Alberta School Act (1988) the *board* meant: "a board of trustees of a district or division or, subject to the *County Act*, a board of education of a county under that Act;" (Section 1(1b)). The Alberta School Act (1988) further stated that "a board shall, unless exempted by the minister, appoint a superintendent of schools who shall be the chief executive officer of the board..." (Section 94(1)). In school jurisdictions that were governed under the County Act

the superintendent was to be the chief education officer of the board. The Acts did not specify the duties or responsibilities of the position.

Recent History of the Superintendency

Prior to the passage of the School Act (1970) most Alberta school superintendents had been employees of the provincial government. There were some exceptions to this pattern in the larger urban jurisdictions, which had long employed their own superintendents of schools. The province had allowed the appointment of local superintendents but, as Downey (1976) indicated, the financial grant structure of the day made provincially appointed and paid superintendents more attractive to boards in that the province, rather than the local jurisdiction, paid for the position (p.1). Boich, Farquhar, and Leithwood (1989) in their review of the position of school superintendents in Canada indicated that this pattern was similar to that of much of Canada.

The trend during the 1960s and 1970s was to the decentralization of authority from the central government to the local jurisdictions. Boich, Farquhar, and Leithwood (1989) pointed to this tendency as being Canada wide with variations depending on the province. In Alberta, this trend to decentralization of authority from the provincial level to locally elected boards was reflected in the School Act passed in 1970. The Act stated that each local jurisdiction "shall... appoint a Superintendent of Schools and in his contract of employment include a statement of his position as chief executive officer of the board..." (Section 65(1)). During the next decade the Act and its Regulations became the focus of varied interpretation particularly the sections where the powers of the provincial

government and the local board appeared to differ or were not clearly specified. Downey (1976) in an inquiry report on the school superintendency in Alberta commissioned by the Department of Education noted that "the legal position of the locally appointed superintendent is in a state of some confusion as a result of this lack of clear legislation (p. 13)."

The situation in Alberta was further confused by the existence of the County Act in which the local governance of education rested in an Education Committee of the County Council. The County Council administered the municipal system as well as the educational system. Downey (1976) concluded that: "the county system creates confusion over the role and position of the superintendent"(p. 14).

From the time when the Downey Report on the school superintendency in Alberta was submitted to the Department of Education in 1976 until 1984, the position and role of the Alberta school superintendency were gradually clarified by regulation and by practice. Ingram and Miklos (1977) were commissioned by Alberta Education to make recommendations clarifying the superintendent's position for local jurisdictions and for the province as a whole. Their report, Guidelines for the Employment of School Superintendents, suggested that the superintendent's position involved many roles including executive, managerial, educational, policy development, and public relations (pp. 22-23,31). The role of the school superintendent continued to develop on the basis of the Downey and the Ingram and Miklos reports as well as by local experience until 1984.

In 1984 the Minister of Education announce that the School Act was to be reviewed. The role of the locally appointed superintendent was to be a significant part of this review. A government discussion document that resulted from this call, Partners in Education, (1985) proposed that the role of the superintendent be one of educational leader in the community and jurisdiction. The superintendent was to be accountable to the board and to the province (p. 41). The discussion document did not result in changes to the legislation.

Speidelsbach (1988), in a report prepared for the Superintendent Qualifications Committee; a joint committee of Alberta Education, Alberta School Trustees Association (ASTA) and the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), made recommendations regarding the role, qualifications, initial training, recruitment and selection, contracts of employment, professional development, and evaluation for superintendents (pp. 11-12). This report noted that: "With ever increasing demands on the superintendency, the need to examine the position and define a desirable role for the superintendent in Alberta became increasingly clear" (p. 1).

The School Act (1988, Sec. 94 [1]) reaffirmed the position of the superintendent of schools as the chief executive officer of the board but refrained from greater specification of the duties other than being subject to regulations governing qualifications (Sec 95). The local school board was left the responsibility of specifically defining the duties in the superintendent's role description.

A news release by the Minister of Education entitled Restructuring Education (1994, January) indicated that the government intended

"phasing in the appointment of all school superintendents by Alberta Education" (p. 2). The release also indicated that the restructuring would be complete by 1997. The provincial government has not carried out the restructuring of superintendent appointments. Amendments to the School Act as of July, 1994 expanded the legislated role of the superintendent of schools by an addition to Section 94:

> **(4)** The superintendent shall supervise the operation of schools and the provision of educational programs in the district or division, including but not limited to the following:
>
> (a) implementing education policies established by the Minister;
>
> (b) ensuring that students have the opportunity in the district or division to meet the standards of education set by the Minister;
>
> (c) ensuring that the fiscal management of the district or division by the treasurer or secretary-treasurer is in accordance with the terms or conditions of any grants received by the board under this Act or any other Act;
>
> (d) providing leadership in all matters relating to education in the district or division.
>
> **(5)** The superintendent shall report to the Minister with respect to the matters referred to in subsection (4)(a) to (d) at least once a year as required by the Minister.

The amendments to the Act continued with Sec. 94.1(1) legislating the term of appointment of the superintendent. Under this section a superintendent could be appointed only to a three-year term and then he or she could be reappointed to additional terms. By 1997, the term was extended to a maximum of five years without a reappointment. These

changes to legislation took place following the observation period of this study but, combined with other restructuring of education in the province, they may mark the most significant changes in the Alberta school superintendency in more than 20 years.

Role of the Superintendent

Farquhar (1991) stated that "the work of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in Canada is not well understood; at present it constitutes an enigma" (p. viii). Genge (1991) noted that "the superintendent must be prepared to operate in a milieu of diversity, ambiguity, and risk taking" (p. 28). Murphy (1994) concluded that his study of Nova Scotia superintendents supported previous research that the superintendency is "a complex, poorly understood, and lonely position with a mandate that is impossible to meet in an organizational environment that is chaotic" (p. 234). The question, then, is what constitutes this enigmatic role in the governance of education?

The superintendent of schools occupies many roles in the school organization. Allison (1989), in exploring the work of Ontario Directors of Education, divided the work into three domains or sectors: board, system, and community (p. 297). The literature review in this section will use Allison's sectors as the organizing format with an additional category of general work experiences.

<u>The Superintendent's role in relation to the Board.</u>

The Alberta School Act (1988) defined the superintendent of schools as the chief executive officer (CEO) of the board (Sec. 94). Bridges (1982) described the superintendent as standing "at the apex of the organizational pyramid in education and manages a multi-million

dollar enterprise" (p. 26). The relationship between the superintendent and the corporate board of trustees, between the superintendent and individual trustees, and between the superintendent and specific trustee positions needs to be examined because of the impact this relationship potentially has on the education system.

In 1957 the Chief Superintendent of Schools in Alberta stated that "a superintendent, by sheer personality and ability as an educator, has to sell himself to the board of education or educational committee with which he is working" (cited in Hencley, 1958). This was before the advent of locally appointed superintendents but the idea of the importance of the relationship between the superintendent and the board remains.

Awender (1985) in a study of superintendent and board relationships examined the relationship between the superintendent and the board from the viewpoint of relative power positions that each has access to when disagreements arise between them. His study identified the sources of power for the board and for the superintendent. The sources of power of the board were: legal authority, electorate support, some knowledge of the system, and personal prestige and social status. The superintendent's power was professional expertise, public opinion, ties with influentials, and access to various power tools in the decision-making process. According to Awender these power sources yield a relatively balanced position between the superintendent and the board. Awender goes on to discuss three other sources of power: finances, personnel, and communications. His conclusion was that the superintendent, by effective operational control of these three sources of

power rather than the legal power which formally rests with the board in these areas, is "handed the opportunity to become the dominant partner in this relationship" (pp. 194-195).

These different sources of power also created potential for conflict. Johnson (1996) discussed the need for superintendents to be politically astute and that they must establish their own base of power within the system (p.158). Sharp and Walter (1997) suggested ways for superintendents to deal with the Board of Education. McAdams and Cressman (1997) found that school board members and superintendents both believed that they should have more authority in relation to the other.

Conflict between the superintendent and the Board of Trustees has been a focus of study of the school superintendency. Edward, Ligon, Butler, and Rendell (1991) in a study of long term incumbents in rural superintendents pointed to the lack of superintendent-board conflict in these long-term superintendent-board relationships. Other researchers have focused on the role of the superintendent as one centered on conflict. Blumberg (1985) characterized the superintendent-school board structure being one that creates underlying tension and conflict (p. 82). Further he stated:

> Regardless of one's [the superintendent] personal feelings of competence, there are basic insecurities connected with the job, and they revolve principally around the superintendent's relationship with the school board, both in its interpersonal process dimension and in its political structure. (p. 83)

The theme of political conflict continues in the literature. Zeigler, Kehoe, and Reisman (1985) stated "superintendents are political actors with political powers. As in other units of government, school district governance involves conflict" (p. 22). They found that "the highly professional superintendents (those that scored higher on the researchers Professional Attitude Scale) spend a great deal more time in conflict with their school boards than the less professional ones" (p. 92). Allison (1989) observed that "tension and conflict can be inescapable aspects of director's work, especially when a board is divided along political lines or trustees involve themselves with system elements" (p. 300). Sharp and Walters (1997) reported that 39.2% of the superintendents surveyed in Illinois and 92.3% of those in Massachusetts felt at least one board member had tried to "stab them in the back" (p. 7). Jackson (1995) pointed out that management of conflict in a politically governed system is a necessary part of the superintendent's job.

Superintendents as political actors interact verbally with the trustees. Pitner and Ogawa (1981) found that the superintendents that they studied spent only six percent of their time in verbal contact with the board. Their study was limited in that only six superintendents were studied and the duration of each observation was only one week. On the other hand, Duignan (1979) found that the superintendents in his study spent 23.3% of their time in verbal interaction with trustees (p. 122). Duignan did not distinguish between the chair and other trustees. Volp, Davis, Whitehall and Barretta (1995) reported that 19% of time of superintendents was spent on Board relations and communications.

Murphy (1994) reiterated that working with the school board placed the greatest demands on the superintendent's time.

Allison (1989) found that many CEO's reported on the importance of their frequent meetings with the board chairperson to discuss general affairs and the business of the next board meeting. He reported that one of the directors of a VLSS (very large school system) met with the chairperson every day and five others stated they met the chairperson "most days" (p. 298). Allison also observed that the interaction between the trustees and the director is less dominant in smaller jurisdictions. He made a further observation that "the individual and small group meetings with trustees are clearly a delicate aspect of a CEO's work, for he or she cannot afford to be suspected of taking sides in political struggles between trustees" (p. 299). This suspicion may be connected to the conflict management and resulting problems referred to earlier.

The superintendent's communication and interaction with trustees includes purposes other than conflict management. Fullan et al. (1987) cited in Allison (1989) found that trustees want "good and complete information from the director, but even more they want advice, recommendations, and direction" (p.78). Allison used the metaphor of a "flight plan" in discussing the preparation of "a roughly drafted script" for public meetings of the board. He stated that this might be carried out in "committee-of-the-whole" meetings held in camera prior to public meetings (p. 299).

McLeod (1984) describes the preparation of a superintendent and the district administrators for a board meeting. Discussions of the agenda, review of specific items, the reactions that may be anticipated,

piloting items through the meeting, and other planning related directly to the board formed a central part of the superintendent's preparation for the meeting of the board (p. 181). Further meetings in the day also focus on the board meeting and preparation for it (p. 184). The superintendent's board meeting in McLeod's study which began in the morning and adjourned at 12:25 a.m. which also gave some indication of the length of the superintendent's work day. One superintendent, when talking about a successful collaboration with other administrators in getting through a board meeting, stated: "And we beat the s... out of the trustees!" (p. 189). This concluding quote may indicate the way some superintendent's view the interaction with trustees that is at odds with a rational-functional view of decision-making.

The literature reviewed illustrates the critical nature of the superintendent-board relationship in the work life of the superintendent, and also shows that this relationship is very much affected by conditions of power, control, communications, and the uncertainty of the role of the superintendent. The literature also shows that the superintendent's role relating to the board is difficult to summarize because of perceptions. As Murphy (1994) reported "Major discrepancies existed between the board chairpersons' perception of the superintendent's role and those of the other three constituent groups" (p. 219).

<u>The Superintendent's role in relation to the system.</u>

The superintendent is the designated formal leader of the school system's organization. In this position the superintendent interacts with, and exerts a great deal of influence over, the organization. Interactions

with subordinates in the central office, schools and the support staff are an important part of the superintendent's role.

Allison (1989) clearly identified the impact of system size on the interactions of the superintendent with subordinates. The larger the system the more the superintendent's work tends to be concentrated in work with other central office personnel rather than at the school level. The smaller jurisdiction superintendents often reported direct involvement with school operations such as teacher evaluations or program implementation. Murphy (1994) also noted this difference in system size as important to the degree of direct involvement of the superintendent.

Allison (1989) further described the interactions of superintendents with principals as again being heavily influenced by the size of the system. The small system superintendents identified the principals or groups of principals as being important to their work. The larger system superintendents seldom or never mentioned interactions with principals. The superintendents surveyed in Murphy (1994) did not rank interaction with in-school administrators higher than sixteenth of twenty-eight areas of involvement. However he also reported that the superintendent of a smaller board stated that "there are many other things I would have identified as being important" (p. 74).

The superintendency is a source of power and generates intraorganizational conflict. In the traditional view (e.g. Weber's) bureaucratic authority is based on expertise. Yet Carter and Cunningham (1997) referred to the superintendency as a "highly politized, conflictive job" (p. 3). In school systems the superintendent,

the central office personnel, the provincial department of education, and the teaching staff may all lay claim to expertise and professionalism. This increases the potential for conflict. In this regard Zeigler, Kehoe, and Reisman (1985) reported that "superintendents thus report more conflict with employees" than do city managers (p. 103). Carter and Cunningham (1997) referred to the superintendent as a "lightning rod for everything related to youth"; and this lightening rod metaphor could be more used to describe the superintendent's position in the school system.

McLeod (1984) observed the contradictions of the superintendency in regard to others in the system. The superintendents in his study espoused aims of encouraging high morale, professional growth, and to foster a sense of common purpose in subordinates. However, at the same time, career and political factors acted to generate insecurity in the superintendents in his study that, in turn, encouraged caution and traditional approaches to minimize vulnerability and give the appearance of control (pp. 179-180). Other researchers reiterate this dichotomy. For example, Wendel (1994) noted that the eight superintendents in his study ranged from "very secure to highly insecure with little middle ground" (p. 300).

Much of the superintendent's time is spent in interactions with subordinates in the system. This interaction is often informal and unscheduled. Duignan (1979) reported that the average superintendent spent 30.7% of his verbal interaction time with central office staff, 13.3% with principals, and 12.9% with teachers, indicating that 56.9% of all verbal interactions were with subordinates. Other researchers have

confirmed the great amount of time spent in interactions with subordinates (McLeod, 1984; Allison, 1989). There are many reasons for the superintendent to devote large amounts of time to interaction with subordinates. The next section deals with these reasons.

Allison (1989) stated that the internal meetings are the mechanism by which the superintendent is able to manage the information flows, keep in touch with events, review progress, and be made aware of new concerns as they arise.

Many researchers have indicated the degree to which the superintendent uses interaction with subordinates to influence the direction of decisions made at lower organizational levels. Trigg (1997) noted that superintendents need to build strong relationships with their staffs to be successful leaders.

Crowson and Morris (1985) observed the use of informal contacts as a means for senior administrators to influence the value premises upon which decisions of subordinates are based (p. 59). A description of a visit by a district superintendent to a school (and the superintendent's actions in speaking to teachers, informal comments, and private discussions with the principal) was used to show how the resulting visit conveyed clear expectations, censure, importance of a particular program, some inside information, and the promise of future help (p. 67). This illustrates the loosely coupled nature of school systems held together by networks of informal controls (p. 57).

Cohen (1982) cited in Floden et al. (1988) noted that the influence of the interactions between the superintendent and the subordinates is not unidirectional but that what others do (or even might do) constitutes

part of the system and influences other actors, including senior administrators (p. 97). Floden et al. (1988) also pointed to the complex and uncertain organizational character of school systems. This further indicates that the superintendent must use formal and informal contacts in the system in order to maintain and influence the system.

Allison (1989) noted that the size of the school system, the associated structures, and environmental factors explained much of the differences in how and with whom superintendents interacted in the system (p. 305). System size and the diversity of the associated structures determine with whom and for what purposes the superintendent interacts.

The literature depicts the superintendent as interacting constantly with the members of the system. Much of the interaction has to do with communicating, planning, organizing, gathering and disseminating information, and influencing the direction of the system.

The Superintendent's role in relation to the Community.

Superintendents operate as public figures in the communities supporting the school system. This position makes the superintendent a ceremonial figure as well as a public relations person for the board and the school system.

Duignan (1980) found that 7.3% of a superintendent's time was spent directly in ceremonial and public relations activities. Green (1988) indicated that the superintendent's human relations skills are important. Murphy (1994) found that public relations are important functions of the role of the superintendent.

Genge (1991) found that effective superintendents were actively involved in their communities, frequently they were members of service clubs and the Chamber of Commerce. The thirteen superintendents in Genge's study sought out opportunities to present information about the schools. The superintendents also sought out opportunities to interact with the community by attending school council meetings, sports events, and other activities where they could interact with the public.

The literature indicates that the position of superintendent is often perceived by incumbents as lonely (Armstrong, 1990; McLeod, 1984). This perception of loneliness is contrasted, however, by others such as Crowson & Morris (1990), Duignan (1979), and Genge (1991) who all reported that superintendents interacted with large numbers of people much of the time. The concept of personal perceptions of loneliness or isolation of the superintendent in the work place is not explored extensively in the literature.

The literature indicates the superintendent to be a public person, interacting extensively with the community served by the school system. The very public position of the superintendent at the center of a very public organization with a role that incorporates carrying out a variety of functions ensures that the superintendent must constantly be interacting with the many communities that form part of the school system.

Studies of the Superintendency

The literature shows a wealth of information about the position of the superintendent of schools. Duignan (1979) studied the actions of six Alberta superintendents when engaged in their daily tasks in their daily

tasks. He outlined the events and the relative time spent by superintendents in their work. The conclusion showed a work life that is broken into many small, often unrelated, interactions. Genge (1991) also reported on the activities of school superintendents and noted the diversity of their contacts. Boich, Farquhar and Leithwood (1989) looked at the history of the school superintendency in Canada. Their study describes a position that has undergone significant change from that of inspector for the provincial government to that of chief education officer for a district. Coleman, Mikkelson & LaRocque (1991) looked at the superintendent's role in *high performing* British Columbia school districts and pointed to the critical role the superintendent plays in a successful district. This study also reported on the strong central office presence in these high-performing districts.

Awender (1985) studied superintendent-school board relationships in Ontario and noted the delicate political balance between the two. Allison (1989) as well, explored the work of Ontario Directors of Education and noted the often conflicting positions of the Director and the Board. Braithwaite (1988) and Green (1988) separately provided descriptions of the roles and common characteristics of school superintendents in Alberta.

Genge (1991) reported on the activities of thirteen Alberta school superintendents identified as effective and noted the diversity of their contacts. Wendel (1994) examined the nature of Alberta superintendent values and demonstrated how these personal values influenced their problem solving and decision making. McMillan (1994) examined the superintendent's view of conflict and conflict management. Murphy

(1994), in a study that included responses from twenty Nova Scotia superintendents, reported on the role, effectiveness, sources of influence, and job satisfaction of superintendents in that province. Millard (1998) examined the perspectives of leaders, including superintendents, in educational change. The participants in her study felt that leaders have the ability to see the global picture, have vision, are able to instill trust, and effective relationships.

Downey (1976), in a report to the Alberta government, outlined the situation of the superintendency in the province five years after changing from provincial to local appointments. He noted that the position, not the role, of the superintendent, was not clearly articulated. Van der Linde (1988) examined career patterns of directors of education in Saskatchewan in which she found that the incumbents followed patterns of increasing responsibility in becoming directors.

The superintendent's *role* in leadership of the school district has been examined by many researchers including Alpin and Daresh (1984); Cuban (1976); Cymbol, (1986); Hallinger and Murphy (1982); and Walker (1989). Koonert and Augenstein (1990) in a handbook for superintendents and board trustees referred to the "uniqueness of the superintendency is the overall scope of the position. The need to look at the big picture is paramount" (p. 50). School Acts, other legislation, and school board policies may each define the role of the superintendent of schools, while individual superintendents may have contracts with their boards that further specify the relationship of the employing board and its superintendent.

Sharp and Walter (1995) studied the effects of the superintendency on family life of the incumbent. Their findings showed that the position takes its toll on family life and that successful incumbents require the support of their spouses, and the need to provide some separation between work and home. Dulgosh (1994) provided an individual history of a first year superintendent. McCormack (1996) presented an ethnographic observation of a superintendent of a one school district implementing change and the impact of the process on the incumbent.

A number of books dealing with the superintendency in the United States have been published recently including Kowalski (1995) who studied contemporary urban superintendents, and Witcher (1996) reported on the progressivism of Arkansas superintendents. Carter and Cunningham (1997) which examined the leadership of school superintendents in an age of change They concluded that to be a superintendent today is to provide leadership in an age of pressure. Chapman (1997) used case studies to examine the work of beginning superintendents in order to provide a guide to learning about the position.

Townsend (1991) in Leithwood & Musella ed. (1991) discussed the use of rhetoric to analyze the activities of a Director of Education in the policy development of a large Ontario school system. This participant-observation study showed the Director interacting with various work groups in the school system (p. 42). Feilders (1982) used a participant-observation study to detail a day in the working life of Robert Alisto, the Chief Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District and the incredible pressure of his position in a diverse school system.

Wirt (1990) commented on the instructional leadership of the superintendent. He stated that: "There clearly is no singular conception of leadership – certainly not superintendent leadership that can be found in experience; rather the concept that their leadership is indeed situational is widely understood by practitioners and scholars alike" (p.4).

Perhaps the words of one chief education officer reported by Musella (1991) indicate why the position of superintendent is worthy of study. He stated that:

> Education is the new religion – the promise of a better future and the scapegoat for current ills. It is under tremendous pressure. The dynamics of change are accelerating. It is no longer good enough to be efficient and professional ...financial stress passed down from higher levels of government, coupled with increasing mandates ... are demanding new responses—new ways of conceptualizing and doing business. (pp. 12-13)

Theoretical Framework

Lancy (1993) declared that the purpose of having a general theoretical framework is to guide the data collection, participant selection, and literature to review rather than looking for data in order to confirm hypotheses. Merriam (1988) suggested that "reality is not a objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality" (p. 39). Psathas (1973), quoted in Bogdan and Biklin (1982), perhaps stated the theoretical underpinnings of this study best by saying that researchers learn from their subjects "what *they* are experiencing, how *they* interpret their experiences, and how *they* themselves structure the social

world in which *they* live" (p.30). The work life of a superintendent of schools could be examined from this framework using intensive observation of a single participant engaged in his or her daily work.

Summary

This literature on the work life of the superintendent of schools began with a legal definition of the position in Alberta, where the study was to take place, and a recent history of the position of the superintendent of schools that province. The literature shows that the position is one that has undergone and continues to undergo change in roles and expectations.

The review of the literature then examined the role and work of the superintendent of schools using three sectors: the school board, the school system, and the community. The literature indicated that the role and work of the superintendent of schools affected by the size of the system. The superintendents' work is characterized by diversity, conflict, uncertainty, lack of clarity in definition, competing demands, constant change and interaction. The literature also indicated that most superintendents were satisfied with their role in spite of the ambiguity.

The literature review showed that there is a great deal of information regarding the superintendent of schools, however the position still remains difficult to understand. The school superintendent operates in an increasingly complex position that is rapidly undergoing changes in expectations, roles, and characteristics. The position of superintendent is being shaped by pressures from within the educational organization in which he or she works. The literature further points out the pressure on the superintendent from agencies outside the school

organization. The activities and nature of the superintendents work life has changed and will continue to change as a result.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design

In this chapter the following processes are described: methodology, locating the participant, the conduct of the study, the establishment of trustworthiness, and data analysis. This study focused on observations of one individual superintendent of schools in a similar vein to Wolcott's (1973) study of the principal, Ed Bell or Moylan's (1988) study of Principal Evelyn Green. Bridges (1982) stated that there are at least four possibilities for data collection: "administering questionnaires, holding interviews, observing subjects directly, and examining traces of records of people and/or their activities" (p.15). Three of the four methods were used to gather data for this study. The primary source of data was obtained by direct observation of the participant. Formal and informal interviews were used to clarify information observed. Records and documents of the participant and his organization were examined.

Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature. The choice of a qualitative method of research was made in order to describe the work life of a single person. Talbot (1995) stated that qualitative research methods "share the following: (1) a world view that assumes multiple realities created by people, (2) a value placed on the perceptions and experiences of people, and (3) a recognition of the unique context from which the experience arises" (pp. 414-415).

The research design emerged as the research proceeded. This interpretivist approach (Morgan, 1990; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) was used to describe the human behavior of the single participant (Kidder,

1981). This design was open-ended and contained a great deal of uncertainty for me. I was excited by this uncertainty but also trusted that it would produce the understanding of the work life that I intended.

During the period of data gathering I discussed the possibilities and choices of handling the material being collected and carded with a classmate at the university. He suggested that I review the work of Moylan (1988). Moylan's study of a single principal was similar to my study of a single school superintendent.

A limitation of the qualitative research is that I had to trust that Peter would be open and honest with me. This research is limited in time and there is much that happened before and afterwards. The findings are limited to what I was able to observe.

Locating the Participant

In order to locate a suitable participant for this study I, in discussion with faculty at the university, identified a set of parameters that the person would have to fit within in order for the study to proceed. It was determined that the participant would have to meet all of these parameters. These parameters included (a) that the participant be a practicing superintendent of schools and be willing to allow me to be part of his or her daily work life for an extended period of time; (b) the participant had to be secure in the position so that the nature of the research and my presence would not threaten his or her position; (c) there had to be the support of the Board of Trustees; (d) the location would be within commuting distance of the University or of my home so that the extended process of observation would be financially possible;

and (e) the participant would ideally be a superintendent with extensive experience in the superintendency.

The above parameters at first seemed to be difficult as I had few contacts within the ranks of practicing superintendents in the province. A conversation with staff at the University resulted in locating a person who fit the profile perfectly. As a result of this conversation I was introduced to Peter.

In our first two meetings, Peter very quickly gave his consent to being the participant. The questions he asked were related to the actual conduct of the study and some issues of logistics. Concerns I expressed about possible negative impacts on Peter were dismissed with the comment: "I've been there so long and I'm near the end of my career so that's no concern to me." In relation to the Board and whether they would be willing to let me gain access to their business, Peter's response was: "Let me take care of it. You'll be my job shadow."

I felt very comfortable after our first two meetings that Peter and I would be able to establish a productive working relationship that would produce the data that the study would require.

Conducting the Study

Kidder (1981) emphasized that naturalistic research has a concern with describing human behavior as it exists. In order to understand actual behaviors of the work life of a superintendent of schools a naturalistic method was felt to be the best choice.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified a number of steps in the implementation stage of a naturalistic inquiry: making initial contact and gaining entrée, negotiating consent, building and maintaining trust, and

identifying and using informants. Each of these steps has a number of sub-steps that were attended to by me.

After Peter and his jurisdiction were identified and permission to proceed was given, I began the process of becoming familiar with the jurisdiction and Peter himself. We had established the intensive daily observation period as being a month during the time when the budgeting process was fully in progress. This intensive observation period was to follow a gradual entrance of the researcher into the system. Peter and I worked out the details about how I was to be introduced to the system.

Le Compte and Goetz (1982) discussed the effects of an observer on the data being gathered. Cook and Campbell (1979) stated that an extended time coupled with regular observations may reduce the halo effect of the researcher on the situation observed. I needed to become familiar with the jurisdiction, the central office personnel, the operation of the board through visits and observation of Board meetings, and through examination of jurisdictional documents such as newsletters, policy manuals, and minutes of board meetings. Peter and I began this process in February, two months before the intensive period of observation, with my attendance at the regular board meetings, being introduced to the staff, and reviewing documents. This introductory phase allowed me to become "part of the scene in the office."

The purpose of this introductory phase allowed me to become familiar with the individuals and issues that were ongoing in the organization. I needed to understand the longer-term background of the jurisdiction, which was accomplished during this first phase of the research. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) referred to "casing the joint"

in order to provide information about the setting but also to "feed into the development and understanding of the research problem" (p. 41).

The second phase consisted of one month of intensive observation of the participant at work. I kept a detailed journal that recorded events Peter was involved in and conversations Peter had. I also recorded in the journal my observations of events, reactions of others to Peter, my own reactions to what I heard and observed, and questions for later clarification. As well, the journal recorded other data from documents and conversation gathered during this intensive period of observation. Some of the interviews with Peter were tape recorded at this time as well.

The intensive period of observation was long enough to provide the accurate detail necessary for the case study but also short enough to be logistically manageable. The period of time chosen was that one month beginning with a board meeting and ending approximately one month later with the next Board meeting and the start of another cycle of activity. Interviews and some specific observations to clarify observations then followed this intensive period.

The time of year for the intensive observation was also considered in planning the conduct of the study. The activities of school systems are cyclical in that activities such as budget development, staffing, and other activities follow a yearly cycle. Discussions with two practicing superintendents, in addition to Peter, indicated that the spring would be the most suitable time of year to observe the work life of a superintendent. Budget, staffing, contract negotiations, and other activities are major aspects of the school organization's year and they are all going on at this time.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the data in a naturalistic study is always a subject open to question. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested five activities: prolonged engagement and persistent observation, peer debriefing, referential adequacy to check raw observation against raw data, member checks, and negative case analysis, that when incorporated into the naturalistic study increase the likelihood of trustworthy results. Eisner (1981) refers to the researcher knowing the subject "by direct, intimate contact" as contributing to trustworthiness (p. 11). He goes on to write "structural corroboration is the term I use to describe the confluence of multiple sources of evidence or the recurrence of instances that support a conclusion" (p. 55) of a naturalistic study. Stake (1994) refers to "...a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue" (p. 237). And, finally, Hammersley, quoted in Huberman and Miles (1984) stated that "An account is valid if it represents accurately those features of the phenomenon that it is intended to describe, explain, or theorize" (p. 441).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested five activities to establish trustworthiness in a naturalistic inquiry. First, prolonged engagement and persistent observation are necessary in order to produce more credible findings and interpretations. Second, they suggested peer debriefing to provide and external check on the process. Third, negative case analysis should be used to refine the hypothesis as the data are gathered. Fourth, referential adequacy activities are suggested to check understanding against the raw data. Finally, they suggested member

checking to test findings and interpretations directly with the human source.

This study used four of the five means of establishing trustworthiness suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These were prolonged engagement and persistent observation, peer debriefing, referential adequacy activities to check understanding against the raw data, and member checking. Negative case analysis was not used as the study did not have a hypothesis to refine as the data were gathered.

Prolonged engagement was achieved by the intensive period of observation of the work life of the participant. In addition to the intensive period of observation, I was able to observe public Board meetings in the jurisdiction, be with Peter at public meetings, and review documents prior to the intensive period. Following the intensive observation, other visits were made to clarify and confirm the data already gathered. Board meeting minutes and committee minutes for the year prior to, and for four months following, the observation period were reviewed. I, while a student at the university, was also able to observe Peter in public presentations in the months prior to the detailed observation period.

A journal of observations and points to clarify for further study provided the persistent observation dimension to the study. As Eisner (1981) suggested "manifest behavior is treated primarily as a cue, a springboard to get to someplace else" (p. 6). The journal recorded these cues to further investigation. Huberman and Miles (1984) urged the use of a log or diary which tracks what was done during analysis (p.28). Altrichter, Prosch, and Somekh (1993) suggested the log or diary contain

both descriptive and interpretative sections. The journal of the study was used to show how the data was used to develop the report.

The peer debriefing was carried out by discussions with Peter and another practicing superintendent to corroborate the information I had gathered during the intensive observation period. I had discussions with two other superintendents one practicing and one retired to corroborate my findings presented in earlier drafts of the report. Discussions also occurred with my advisor. These discussions were carried out during and after the intensive observation period. Peter was invited to examine and review data I was gathering and to comment on it. Peter never requested major changes. He would suggest things I might have missed. Because of the nature of the data that were collected, and the ethics requirements of the study, the raw data were retained but I will be the only one given access without Peter's permission after the completion of the study.

The fifth category of the Lincoln and Guba techniques of demonstrating trustworthiness is the member check. They defined this as the method;

> whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholder groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. (p. 315)

The focus of this study was on the work life of Peter as a single superintendent of schools. I provided Peter the opportunity to review transcripts and drafts of analyses in order for him to clarify or correct information. He never did change or seek to modify any of my

observations. He did sometimes point out context for observations that I had missed, or Peter provided background to events that allowed me to place my observations into perspective. Peter was also given informal opportunities to reflect on the data through conversations with me.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that transferability is possible if the description is thick enough and therefore the researcher's task is to provide the database that maybe used by others. I have attempted to provide this but it is limited to my selections. The two superintendents who reviewed the later drafts indicated that the findings seemed to hold true. In the final analysis it will rest with readers of the material to decide for themselves whether or not the findings have transferability for them.

Gathering the Data - the Fieldwork

Le Compte and Goertz (1982) suggested that notes on observations should contain descriptors that are as concrete and precise as possible including verbatim accounts of what people say and narratives of behavior and activities. They also asserted that the notes "may contain any combination of high inference interpretive comments" (p. 41). Spradley (1980) and Le Compte and Goertz (1982) suggested the use of a journal to record field notes. Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh (1993) recommended that the diary contain both description and interpretive sequences. The journal would contain observations, verbatim accounts of discussions, narratives, reflections, questions, and ideas that the researcher notes during the observation period.

I began my journal following Peter's agreement to be the participant in this study. Initially the journal was used to record

comments and ideas for the study. As the study progressed the journal included: (a) observations of Peter, the Board, meetings, and verbatim conversations; and (b) notes regarding documents, conversations with peers, and anything else that pertained to the study became part of the journal. The journal recorded my personal feelings and attitudes towards events I was observing. The rough notes made during the day were transcribed to my computer record of the field notes. The observations were recorded using a date, time, location format (e.g., 06/03/10:35/Peter's office). The computer notes also recorded my observations and comments on the data gathered during the day. The computer field notes were printed out into hard copy on a daily or weekly basis. The notes were physically cut up and pasted onto cards.

The collection and transcription of the notes allowed me time for reflection on the data being collected. The emerging themes and specific events provided guidance for further observations and for questions to ask Peter. "Could you explain ... that happened yesterday?" or notes to myself "Watch what happens with...." Sometimes the reflections showed my frustration with my inability to have all the data or ability to record the nuances of an event.

The presence of an outsider at a sensitive meeting was a concern for this research. Peter would include me most times but would ask me to leave at others. This arrangement had been arrived at before the observation period occurred. As it turned out during the course of the observation I was only asked to leave twice. Other meetings may have occurred that I was not aware of. This is a difficulty of the qualitiative researcher faces. Peter would give a summary of what had transpired in

my absence. There were no verbatim notes taken during meetings with only one or two individuals, as I believed it to be to disruptive to the other people. I told this to Peter early in the observation period and he agreed with my belief. Notes on these types of meetings were written as soon after the event as possible, usually that evening.

A recorded interview was held with Peter three weeks following the intensive observation period. The interview was transcribed and the data treated in the same manner as were the field notes. Peter was given a copy of the interview transcript for comment and clarification. He did not request or identify any need to change the data. A telephone conversation was the extent of sharing my interpretations with Peter.

Analyzing the Data

Data analysis was carried out during the data gathering phases of the research and continued afterwards. The research problem of the study was to understand the work life of a single superintendent of schools, Peter. The work life of Peter began to emerge from the data as common themes. Individual events could be placed together because the events were similar or the people involved were the same. As the cards recording individual events accumulated the themes became the roles that I assigned to them. The roles that emerged in Peter's work life were: information gatherer, information disseminator, defender, decision-maker, negotiator, spokesman, and cheerleader/flag bearer.

Ethical Considerations

In a study of this nature there is the possibility of negative impacts on the person studied or on others that are described in the study. All attempts were made to mask the identities of individuals and the

jurisdiction so as to protect the confidentiality of individuals. The individuals who were closely involved in Peter's work were informed that I was studying Peter. It was not anticipated that Peter would interact with students except in public and this proved to be the case.

Peter was informed that the study could result in a negative impact on him. He agreed to proceed by reiterating that: "I am far enough along in my career and am confident enough that it will not hurt me."

The Board was informed that I would be involved in studying Peter and his work. The Board agreed to allow me access to *in camera* materials and documents with Peter's discretion. The Chair suggested that Peter use his own judgment regarding my presence during *in camera* meetings of the Board or my access to documents that were not in the public domain. There were a few instances where Peter suggested I should not be present. All documents not in the public domain reviewed as part of this study were requested from Peter and returned to the jurisdiction offices.

The Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Education Policies Studies conducted an ethics review. The recommendations of the review were followed in the conduct of the study and the preparation of the report.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the methodology used to conduct this study. Locating the participant, Peter, was accomplished with advice from the members of my committee. The conduct of the study consisted of the use of a naturalist methodology. Trustworthiness was established using prolonged engagement, persistent observation,

peer debriefing, referential adequacy activities, and member checking. The methods of gathering the data included observation, journal, transcription of notes, and interviews. The process used in analysis of the data involved the use of cards that noted similar events, accumulated into themes that were then assigned roles. The ethical considerations that guided the study were discussed.

Chapter 4 will present a description of the Glengarry School District.

CHAPTER 4

Glengarry School District Context

Introduction

The research problem of this study was to describe the work life of one superintendent of schools. While the Superintendent influences the workplace, the District in which the superintendent operates has an impact on his or her work life. This chapter provides a detailed description of the Glengarry School District, the Board of Trustees, the organizational structure of the Central Office, the Superintendent's Team, and the physical layout of the central office, including the Board chambers, executive suite, and Peter's own office within the executive suite. A detailed description of a typical day and of a meeting of the school board are included. The chapter concludes with a brief description of Peter's work experiences.

The Glengarry School District

The Glengarry School District was located in a suburban area of a metropolitan region of approximately 650,000 population. The population of the school district itself was approximately 100,000. The District provided the educational services for approximately 12,000 students. There were three major communities, four smaller ones, and many acreage developments, as much of the area was undergoing transformation from agricultural land to rural residential. The population of the District had been expanding rapidly for many years. The District was also undergoing industrialization that had begun some years before. This meant that the District was one of relative wealth when compared to other jurisdictions in the Province.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of the Glengarry School District, like all school boards, operates under the School Act of the Province. The School Act requires that the Board hire a Superintendent of Schools who was designated the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Board. The Board was responsible for the operation of the school district through the allocating of resources, hiring staff, developing and implementing policies for the district, and planning for the provision of educational services in the district. The Superintendent was the individual who carried out the mandate of the Board.

The Glengarry School District was part of a county. This was reflected in the way the School Trustees came to be on the Board. At the time the study was conducted there were fifteen trustees in the Glengarry School District, elected by wards, every three years. Six of the trustees were elected as school trustees only. The other eight trustees had been elected as municipal councilors and therefore served a dual role: that of school trustee and municipal councilor. Because there was a Separate School District that served the area of Glengarry one municipal councilor was not on the Glengarry Board of Trustees because of religious affiliation. The Reeve of the Municipal District served on the Board of Trustees as a trustee.

Under the Provincial Municipalities Act the Municipal district was the direct taxing body. The Municipal District collected taxes but the School District set its own budget and mill rate. During the progress of the study the Province was in the process of removing education taxation

authority from the local school districts and replacing the local system with one whereby the Province would receive and redistribute most school tax revenues.

The school board members elected solely as school trustees had a different electorate than the members of the board elected as municipal Councilors and therefore often had different concerns about and views on issues placed before the Board. The six people elected as school trustees were elected on only school-related issues. The nine people elected as municipal councilors had wider interests than just education. For these trustees the School Board was a committee of the Municipal District. The School Board was viewed by some trustees as a stepping stone to other political offices. Peter explained that the Reeve was a former trustee and board chair and a number of the Municipal Councilors had entered political life as School Trustees. He also indicated that at least two of the current School Trustees had other political ambitions at the municipal or provincial level.

Board Chair

The Board Chair's position had a major impact on the work of the Superintendent of Schools. The Board elected the Chair every year by a vote of all the trustees. In Glengarry, the Chair was always a person elected as a school trustee not a county councilor. Peter indicated that this was a position that held a great deal of prestige, potential power, and influence. The Chair was the official spokesman for the Trustees, chaired the Board meetings, served in an ex-officio capacity on all committees of the Board, and had input into the agenda of the Board meetings. The Chair of the Board met regularly with the Superintendent

but also was in informal and formal contact with the Chairs of other districts, the Provincial school trustees association, and the Provincial government. This gave the Chair access to a great deal of information that was not necessarily available to other trustees. Part of the job of the superintendent was to orient the Chair to the office and to keep the incumbent informed about the affairs of the District. According to Peter, the Chair of the Glengarry Board was normally elected from the school trustee and not from the municipal councilors. The chair, during the time of the study, was Tom, who was serving his third term as a trustee and second year as Chair. Peter indicated that Tom had voiced interest in running for a municipal position in the future. He had been employed in private business prior to becoming politically involved on the School Board.

The Reeve

The Reeve of the municipal district sits on the Board of Trustees. The current Reeve, Dick, had been originally elected as a school trustee, served as the Board chair, moved to the municipal council and was elected as the Reeve in the most recent municipal elections. He had been employed in business but municipal politics was now his major activity. He was a powerful figure on the Board and had extensive influence on the other trustees because of his experience and position. Dick had been approached to run for a position as a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the next provincial election.

Other Trustees

The other trustees, both those elected as school trustees and those elected as municipal councilors, represented a cross section of the

community. There were four active business people, one woman who was not employed prior to election, a lawyer, a retired school teacher, three people employed by large corporations, a social worker employed by the province, and two people who were retired from private business. Three of these trustees stood out in their influence on Peter's work: Terry, a retired farmer; Tom, the social worker; and Diana, the retired teacher. Peter was aware of their positions on issues and their influence on the other trustees.

The Three Influential Trustees.

Terry was elected as trustee representing a smaller city in the district. He was a retired farmer and had been elected during the previous election to his first term. Peter indicated he was politically ambitious. Terry had a brusque manner and often was combative. In the six Board meetings or Board committee meetings I attended where Terry was present, and from review of the minutes of previous board meetings, Terry was the trustee who usually made corrections to minutes of meetings. He often was among the dissenters on recorded votes. He was extremely well prepared for meetings with questions and comments prepared for presenters or on most motions that were put forth. Many of the questions and comments were phrased in a manner and delivered in a tone of voice that resulted in embarrassing or demeaning the person to whom they were addressed. An example of his phrasing was: "You *should* have known what the numbers were!" during public debate on the budget. Outside of the Board meetings Terry was polite and friendly and so it is questionable if he was even aware of his manner on others. Peter stated: "He is, without a doubt, the most difficult trustee I have ever

worked with." On many issues Terry would refuse to concede to others and often required the intervention of the Chair to bring him under the rules of order for the meetings. Prior to the period under study there had been a move to have him removed from the Board by a number of other trustees.

Tom, the Vice-Chairman, was a trustee who had been elected as a school trustee from one of the less urbanized wards in the district. The voters in this ward were still predominately agricultural. He was a civil servant who did not have any political ambitions beyond the school board. Tom was observed to have a position on most issues. He was the major spokesman for those Board members elected as school trustees as opposed to those elected as municipal councilors who sat on the Board of Trustees.

Diana was a retired teacher serving her second term as a school trustee. She was outspoken and presented herself as representing the professional, school based educators', position to the Board. She often prefaced her remarks with statements such as "When I was teaching..." or "I think teachers need to be consulted about...." She focused on policy matters and spoke to policy proposals as she perceived them being implemented in the schools.

Organizational Structure of Glengarry School District

The Glengarry School District's formal organizational structure was typical of most school districts in the Province. The School Act mandated that the elected Board of Trustees was the responsible body for the operation of the school district. The Act also stated that the Board must employ a Superintendent of Schools as the Chief Executive Officer of the

Board. The organizational structure for the system was locally developed.

During the time of the study the Glengarry School District employed three Assistant Superintendents. Each Assistant Superintendent was in charge one part of the school district operations: instructional services, facilities and transportation, and personnel. There were ten directors in charge of various departments such as: transportation, maintenance, research, science and math curriculum, special needs services and humanities education. The division employed a Treasurer who acted at the level of an Assistant Superintendent in that he reported to Peter. The Central office staff also included a Board Secretary and a Communications Officer. In addition to the positions above the central office employed twelve support secretarial and clerical staff. A central feature of the Glengarry School district central office administration is the Superintendent's Team (Super's team). The most important influences on Peter's work life were the Superintendent's team of the three Assistant Superintendents, Treasurer, and the Board Secretary as recording secretary.

Superintendent's Team.

Peter created the team when he assumed the superintendency. The team consisted of the Superintendent, the three Assistant Superintendents, Treasurer, and Board Secretary. Peter's secretary prepared the documents, minutes, and other papers required by this group. The team had an inner and outer group. The superintendent and the assistants formed the inner group. The treasurer and board secretary were included for matters that dealt with their departments.

The team meetings also included directors, principals or others who had insights into, or information on, particular topics. Team meetings were held every Monday morning beginning at 9:00 and were scheduled to last until 12:00. During the observation period the length of the meetings were flexible. On most occasions the meetings ended before noon. An interesting aspect of the team meetings occurred when one of the members had a "teacher buddy" for the day. This shadow was included I the open section of the meeting.

It was apparent that everyone was expected to be in attendance but individuals could be absent for portions of the meeting. An example of this was the Assistant Superintendent (Personnel) who was in the process of contract negotiations, and so that activity took priority. The agendas were often flexed to accommodate individual schedules.

Peter chaired the meetings but the members of the team carried most of the discussion of items and issues. The purpose of the team meetings was to discuss strategy for the Board meetings, communicate between departments, discuss matters that had emerged in the District that could influence the operation, share ideas for handling concerns or issues, and coordinate responses and activities.

The discussions were quite open and dealt with all matters that could affect the Division or its operations. The meetings provided a regular forum for the Superintendent's team to discuss and seek advice of the other team members on issues that each department was facing.

The team meeting that occurred on the Monday prior to the Board meeting was used to review the agenda items and recommendations on the Board agenda. The group discussed a variety of matters: who was to

handle the issue in the meeting and what support they might require; the possible questions from trustees and alternative responses; the probable positions of the trustees on various items; and the choices or optional positions that might be acceptable if the proposed administration recommendation was not accepted by the Board. A description of a typical Super's team meeting is given as part of Chapter 5.

Glengarry School District Central Offices

The physical space that the superintendent of schools works in has an impact on the work that he or she does. The use of physical space, furniture, symbols, and materials is important in conveying the position and authority of the person occupying the area.

This section gives a description of the physical area in which Peter carried out most of his work. The section provides a description of the general education and municipal office building; a more detailed description of the education offices, including Peter's personal office, and a description of how these areas were used during the observation period.

Glengarry Education and Municipal Offices.

The office building that housed the Educational and Municipal offices of the Glengarry district was a modern, two-story structure that occupied a central location in Glengarry. The building was constructed of brick with large areas of glass and was one of the most imposing buildings in the community. Education offices occupied about 30 per cent of the building, 40 percent was occupied by the municipal district

and the rest is either public space or given to joint use such as the School Board-County Council chambers and printing services.

Peter indicated that the negotiations between the educational and municipal governments over the use of space or joint sharing of space had sometimes been difficult. He also said that as the size of educational and municipal organizations continued to shrink this became less of a problem. The joint use of facilities such as meeting rooms sometimes did make the scheduling of meetings more complex. I observed that most rooms had a schedule posted for meetings that were slated for the space and when a group planned a meeting the space schedules were consulted. Peter did state at one point that the joint use of space made quickly called meetings of more than a couple of people a frustrating exercise.

The ground floor of the building was occupied primarily by the Municipal function. The second floor of the building housed the Education offices as well as the School Board-County Council Chambers. The Student and Instructional Services department was located in its own suite of offices. The Executive Suite housed the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent (Facilities), Board Secretary, Communications officer's workspace and office, the Superintendent's conference room, and the reception and secretarial functions of the Executive. The executive suite was attached by an internal doorway to the School Board - Council chambers and by an internal hallway to the area where the Trustees and Councilors have their office spaces. It was possible, therefore, to move from the Superintendent's office area to the Board Chairman's office without going into the public domain.

Peter's Personal Office.

Peter's personal office in the executive suite was situated in the northeast corner of the building and commanded quite striking views of the community through two large windows. The furnishings were teak with brass fittings. Peter's chair was a high back leather swivel. An exception to this decorating pattern was a round oak dining room style table with six oak chairs that could act as a table for meetings with small numbers of people. During the time of the observations it was used only three times for this purpose. The first was a negotiating meeting; the second was for a meeting with a parent; and the third was for a meeting with a person who was requesting the support of the superintendent for a funding proposal. The bookshelves and credenza had a few displays of personal items. These were generally related to work such as plaques and momentos that had been presented to Peter over the years: a plaque from Peter's service club for long service, one from the Chamber of Commerce, and one from the Provincial Superintendent's Association for his year as President.

There were some books, about 20, all dealing with school or organizational topics that Peter indicated were important to him in his personal outlook on work. But, he noted: "I haven't got time to read them or anything else I'd like to."

There was very little material on display related to the work of the district. I was struck by the lack of binders, policy manuals, and other documents in Peter's office. He commented that this was his choice and he could get anything he needed from the secretary.

Peter's office wall had only three pictures: a photo of a space shuttle from a trip to NASA, an ocean beach scene, and a picture of sail boats in a harbor. When asked about them Peter said "I always dreamed of living by the sea and owning a sailboat when I retire. The space shuttle picture is just something I picked up on a vacation."

A wall-mounted whiteboard was used by Peter to write notes to himself and as an instructional instrument, as when he answered one of my questions by drawing a diagram on the whiteboard. There was one large plant in the office, watered and cared for by Pat. There was a built-in closet that held a shaving kit and raincoat. In four weeks I never observed Peter ever using the closet, as he hung his jacket on a corner coat stand or over the back of his chair.

The dominant feature of the office was the desk, credenza, and computer station. When Peter was in the office this was the center of his activities. Generally speaking, the desk was quite clear of materials and papers. The secretary kept it organized and regularly removed materials Peter had completed working on. He used the computer with its E-mail links extensively to communicate with others. The phone with its voice mail was also on the computer terminal table. I observed that most of the time Peter was sitting behind his desk he was actually facing the terminal. Peter commented that this was the best thing they had done for communication in the district and he used the technology extensively. When asked about the source of the furnishings and the office decorations Peter stated that: "They are inherited from [the previous superintendent]".

A Typical Day

Peter usually arrived at the office at approximately 8:10 a.m. This would vary if there was an early meeting with special groups or Service Club breakfast meetings. Peter checked with his secretary about his calendar and to review the events scheduled for the day.

Peter always greeted everyone with pleasant "good mornings." The day usually consisted of a multitude of scheduled meetings and communications with various people and over a variety of issues. Peter would first check his written memos or notes on the desk. These were usually few and, if possible, the answer was delivered by voice or E-mail immediately. Then he would turn to the voice and electronic mails for messages and would reply to those that required replies. Priority was given to messages from the Board chair, trustees, senior administrators, and principals. Other replies would be given as time permitted.

During one day that was analyzed in detail Peter handled 43 messages through voice and E-mail, initiated nine telephone calls, received ten telephone calls, met with the Board chair twice, spoke to the three Assistant superintendents (one three times, a second two times as individuals, and twice to all three at once), met with two trustees, spoke to one of the directors regarding a project, spoke with his secretary seven times and spoke in-passing to three other people. This was in addition to having two scheduled meetings that were for two hours each. One meeting was with the Superintendent's team and the second was with the Transportation committee. Except for the meetings with the Board chair, the Assistant Superintendents, as a group, and the director none of the communications took more than between three to four minutes

from initiation to conclusion. Peter had three telephone conversations with media reporters. Peter spoke with or e-mailed two principals in response to their messages. During this day that spanned from 8:10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Peter had a fifteen-minute coffee break and took fifty-eight minutes for lunch, which included a personal meeting. There had been only three continuous spans of time where Peter was not interacting with others. The shortest was eleven minutes and the longest were twenty-four and twenty-five minutes respectively.

Most days were made up of short interchanges with a great variety of people and dealt with a multitude of different information. There was little consistency in any of the interactions. Variety was the norm. It was not unusual for Peter to be dealing with a matter of Provincial government policy change and its impact on the system, immediately shift to talking with a parent regarding a child's transfer to an alternative program, and then make a decision regarding strategy for a presentation to the Board, all in the span of a few minutes.

A typical day began at 7:00 with a service club breakfast meeting that Peter said he enjoys very much. Peter arrived at the office at 8:40 and immediately was on the job. The reeve had already been in the office looking for Peter. The day consisted of a constant string of calls from trustees, reporters, parents, brief meetings with other administrators, interchanges with the secretarial staff and voice and e-mail messages. There was little time for focus on any topic. The longest uninterrupted time was twenty-five minutes. Peter was constantly engaged in work related material. Business was the focus of discussions with personal interchanges a minimum. Peter left the office for home at 5:40. A typical

day lasted ten and a half hours. Many days would have included an additional commitment in the evening for meetings or a school function.

Appendix A provides a detailed record of interactions for the superintendent during one working day. This particular day was the first one following the passage of the budget by the Board. In Appendix B there is a description of two other major events in Peter's work where the interaction with the senior administration Superintendent's Team and the interaction during a meeting of the School Board are recorded.

The day described above was quite typical of the days that were observed. The rapid change and diversity of activity left little time for extended periods of planning, reflection, or deliberation. Peter required extensive understanding of the system in order to make quick decisions on a diversity of matters.

A Board Meeting

Peter's work was very focused on the Board and the decisions made by the Board during their meetings. This section describes a typical Board meeting. The description is not based upon one meeting but has elements drawn from a number of meetings I attended. The description tries to convey the story of a meeting rather than a detail of one meeting. A detailed journal record of one meeting is provided in Appendix B.

Peter arrived shortly after eight o'clock, checked his messages and called each of the assistant superintendents to make sure there was nothing new since their meeting yesterday. Peter meets briefly with the Chair to be sure there are no surprises. Peter moves into the Boardroom and takes his place to the right of the Chair. The meeting is called to

order at nine o'clock. The first few minutes are taken up with the invocation, additions and deletions to the agenda. The minutes of the previous meeting are adopted with one trustee pointing out five errors, omissions, or changes he wanted made. The Board then moved *in camera*. The chairman gave his report followed by Peter's report. Peter's report took only ten minutes. Peter's report was followed by other reports but he took no part except to listen. The meeting then reverted to open session.

A trustee raised a concern about an incident at one of the high schools that had occurred the previous day. Peter responded by outlining the action the principal had taken in the incident and promised to check for clarification for one of the trustees.

This discussion was followed by a break. All during the break trustees seeking information approached Peter. He spent a few minutes suggesting ways the Chair could deal with motions. "This is what is needed here.... You have to have this passed before this is brought forward.... Remember this is an amendment and needs to be debated and voted first...."

When the meeting was called back to order the trustees engaged in debate over various budget issues. Peter made notes of points but seldom entered into the discussion except to provide clarification or suggest wording for a motion. "May I suggest that...." or "That term refers to...." were his contributions.

Upon completion of the debate Peter moved to the presenter's table and made his public report. This was substantially the same as the in camera report with deletion of a personnel issue and a student related

matter. He added thank-you comments to individuals and provided updates on progress made on the strategic plan.

The Board engaged in debate on various issues. Peter listened and tried to move them forward when they get bogged down. His body language and voice conveyed his frustration with the proceedings. When a trustee requested a policy review on school based administrator appointments and what the Board involvement should be, Peter gave no reaction but stared into the distance.

The lunch break was called. Peter and the Associate Superintendents discussed the progress made. He discussed the lack of control and direction of the meeting. Peter met separately with the one of the Associate Superintendents regarding administrator assignment notices. He gave approval to go ahead and release the information.

Peter left the office for ten minutes to have a walk outside. He had no lunch. When he returned he spoke with a presenter for the afternoon session. Peter moved into the Boardroom. For the remainder of the afternoon Peter had little involvement with the proceedings. He answered questions and provided background when requested. Peter's comments and actions increasingly portrayed frustration and tiredness as the meeting dragged on. A thirty-two minute debate on a motion to call for proposals for auditing elicited an observation from Peter that "Only this group could debate that."

The meeting adjourned at 6:15. Peter left immediately for home.

The Board meetings were important in Peter's work life. The meetings were a public forum for debate. The meetings, however, held Peter fixed in place and often not involved for long periods of time. The

meetings themselves were a source of frustration for Peter if the proceedings did not move forward. The meetings were also a source of uncertainty for Peter. He spent a great deal of time ensuring that information, presentations, and debate would remain on the anticipated course. Peter checked and re-checked information to limit the surprise element in every public meeting.

Summary

The research problem was to describe the work life of one superintendent of schools. That person was Peter. The district Peter worked for was the Glengarry School District, a fairly large Alberta rural/urban district of about 12 000 students. The district was not faced with unusual political, social, or financial situations that would affect its operations at the time of the study. The exception to this was the uncertainty that the anticipated Provincial government restructuring would bring. Peter stated that central office facilities were acceptable for the operation and provided him with a reasonable degree of comfort in which to work. Other than the scheduling of meetings into limited space the District facilities were not a factor in how Peter worked.

Peter's work life reflected the findings of much of the previous research discussed in the literature review. Peter's work was characterized by a great deal of diversity in interactions with many different people: trustees, either individually or as the collective Board, central office administrators, support staff, principals, the media, and parents. Much of the work life was spent in meetings with other administrators and trustees. Peter's position at many of these meetings found him with little to do other than be there for long periods. Peter

spent little time with students, teachers, and school-based personnel other than principals.

Peter's work caused him to constantly "shift gears." He jumped from parent concern, to policy interpretation, to responding to a media question, to advising on a decision, to suggesting alternatives for action often within the space of a few minutes. These shifts were almost always initiated by others rather than Peter. There was seldom any time in the workday for reflection or contemplation. Peter's work life was one of responding to others questions, proposals, and needs.

Peter was called upon to make judgements, suggestions, and decisions without much time for consideration or reflection. He was able to do this because of his extensive knowledge and information gathering. Peter never referred to the written policies of the District for guidance. He was intimately aware of them. He constantly sought information from others and he provided information to others. In turn Peter received information. Chapter 5 deals with this aspect of Peter's work more extensively.

His working day was long. He averaged over ten hours each day with about two evenings each week taken up with work related activities. The longest day I spent with Peter was just over thirteen hours. Peter was careful to guard his weekend time from work demands.

When asked about personal activities Peter stated he does not have time to do many of the things he that he enjoys such as golf, curl, attend games, and such because he has so many commitments in the evening. During the observation period, one incident illustrated this commitment

when Peter planned to attend a baseball game but received an invitation to a school drama production that he attended instead.

Peter had a very broad range of experience in education, municipal government, and organizations. He had been a teacher, vice-principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. Peter also had been involved in municipal politics as a councilor and as the mayor of a town. He had been involved in sports organizations as a coach, manager, official and board member during his life. Peter had also served on provincial professional organizations during his career.

The observations of Peter's work life confirm the findings of many other researchers. Similar to the findings that Duignan (1979) reported in his study of superintendents, Peter's daily work entailed a great deal of diversity and a multiplicity of contacts. Peter's time spent with the superintendent's team in preparation for the Board meetings, and the length of Peter's work days, confirm the findings of McLeod (1984). When Peter interacted with the chair, he was careful to provide good clear information to him as did Allison's (1989) directors. Genge (1991) reported on the involvement of superintendents in their community which Peter actively did throughout the observation period. Murphy's (1994) reports of discrepancies between the chairperson's perception (and the perceptions of other groups) of the superintendent's role were also noted in my observations.

Chapter 4 provided a description the Glengarry School District. The chapter included a discussion concerning the Board and the organizational structure of the Glengarry School District. This was followed by a description of the physical layout of the Glengarry central

offices and Peter's personal office in the building. The chapter included a detailed description of a typical work day and a typical board meeting. Chapter 5 will describe the roles that Peter performed consistently during the time of the study.

CHAPTER 5

Superintendent's Role

Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the findings related to the roles Peter portrayed consistently during the observation of his work life. Included is a description of how the researcher identified these seven roles.

The Roles

The research problem for this study was to observe and describe the work life of a superintendent of schools. As the observations of Peter at work progressed and were analyzed common behaviors in different situations emerged from the data. These common behaviors became the roles that I designated. In this study roles are defined as common work behaviors observed during the study. As the observation period progressed the same roles were portrayed consistently by Peter in different situations.

Identifying the Roles

Moylan (1988) in her description of the work of an elementary school principal identified eight roles portrayed by the participant. She identified the roles as: enabler, empathizer, challenger, advocate, collaborator, image-maker, loyalist, and tactician. These roles of the principal emerged from Moylan's observations of Principal Evelyn Green.

During the data collection I was constantly sorting, reviewing, and following-up observations I was making. As the data were coded and sorted several common behaviors of Peter began to emerge. Later these common behaviors became the seven roles I used to frame this report. These roles I designated as follows: information gatherer, information

disseminator, defender, decision-maker, negotiator, spokesman, and cheerleader and flag bearer. The roles are not dissimilar to those created by Moylan (1988) to describe the work of Principal Evelyn Green. The titles of the roles reflect my own interpretation of Peter's work activities I observed.

Information Gatherer

The first emerging role that Peter engaged in was as an ongoing *information gatherer.* For the purpose of this study, the definition of the term 'information gatherer' is a person who actively seeks information about events, plans, actions, and intentions of other people or other organizations, which may affect the organization's activities. Peter had extensive contacts within the educational community of the jurisdiction, the university, provincial government, neighboring school and municipal jurisdictions, the superintendent's association, past and present employees, as well as with local and provincial politicians.

Observation of Peter's interactions with others who had the possibility of having information that would affect the jurisdiction showed that he questioned and probed, gathered information from one source and then confirmed it through other conversations. This information-gathering role was demonstrated in Peter's interaction with a senior official of the Department of Education, the informal Metro Superintendent's group, and the Chairman of the Board.

<u>The senior official of the Department of Education</u>.

The Department of Education official had been invited to a public forum to discuss new direction in policy that the Department was implementing. Peter had handled the invitation on behalf of the Board.

Peter took the opportunity before and after the forum to probe for information that was of concern to the jurisdiction. Peter did not ask direct questions but provided leading statements and listened for response. Peter:

> "We have a great deal of concern about the Provincial budget cuts to the _____ program." The reply was, "We are going ahead with the cut and if anyone wants to do something else (referring to increased funding at a jurisdiction level) they can go ahead."

The information gathered from this confirmed two matters for Peter which had been subject of intense speculation among members of the *Super's team*: 1) the government was not about to change the policy in spite of growing popular opposition; and 2) that individual jurisdictions could divert funds from other programs into the program: a local choice that was unclear from government documents.

After the forum, the Chair of the Board, Peter, and the official went to a local lounge for a drink. Peter acted as host. The Chair was more direct with his questions regarding the government budget cuts. "Are they going to change their minds?" and "How do they expect to get votes?" The official confirmed the Government's determination. "No way we're backing down." and "We don't care who gets in the way." Peter listened but kept his input to social matters not related to policy. Afterward, I asked Peter about this and he replied: "I let the politicians talk and just listen." He was gathering information on the degree of the government's determination to proceed. Later Peter would use this to confirm other information with other sources.

The Regional Superintendents' meeting.

The Superintendents of the region met on a relatively informal basis. These meetings were held eight or nine times during the school year. The group consisted of the superintendent of the large city board and of the suburban boards surrounding the urban center. The superintendents of the Catholic Boards were not included. As Peter stated: "They are the competition." The purpose of the meeting was to provide a venue for informal discussion of general matters, both local and provincial, that were of concern to all of the districts. Peter indicated that it was an opportunity for equals to network but that the superintendent of the urban Board was in a "whole different position than we are."

The meeting format was lunch, hosted on a rotating basis among the members, followed by a meeting; the agenda for which the host was responsible each month. The meeting was informal with no minutes kept or records maintained. I asked Peter about the cost of these and similar meetings and he stated that the Board expected him to gather information and that there was a discretionary budget for this.

The group gathered at a restaurant in the city, as the urban superintendent was the host. There was a new member of the group who had just been appointed to the superintendency of one of the jurisdictions. He was introduced and indicated his pleasure at being included. The discussion over lunch was general in nature with relations between Boards and budget processes and progress being a major topic. Questions such as "How are you handling kindergarten cutbacks?" and "What do you think the government means do to force regionalization?",

would elicit responses from each person. "We are going to...." or "I have heard that if they don't get the target then they will legislate with their goals in mind." Some of the questions were advice seeking. "How are you going to approach...?" The other superintendents, including Peter, seemed very open in their answers and giving input. I asked Peter to reflect on this after the meeting and he stated that, "We are all in the same boat and by sharing what we know makes all of our jobs a bit easier especially when we deal with the Department."

After lunch the meeting became more formal. The agenda had only four topics: proposed revisions to the School Act, Kindergarten, teacher contract negotiations, and regionalization. The discussion on each topic was led by the host and then proceeded around the table. Much of what was said was rumor and speculation. The sharing, though, also provided an opportunity to confirm other sources for the same information. "I was talking to someone in the Department who said they were proposing to cap Superintendent's salaries below the Deputy Minister's." Another member of the group added: "I was at a meeting where the same thing was said." This was followed by a comment from Peter that this would create "major recruitment problems for attracting high fliers to the Superintendency." The others agreed.

An interesting note to the conversations here was that sources, dates, and specific information about meetings were never given or asked for. Peter stated that all of them have their own sources and guard them closely. This pattern was confirmed a few days later when Peter shared some information with the Board Chair that he had gathered from a

conversation with a neighboring superintendent. When asked for the source he simply said "I can't tell you." and the question was dropped.

The group was very open in sharing the progress on teacher salary negotiations. All were seeking the best settlement for the Board side. The group shared small pieces of information about where the negotiations were going, stumbling blocks, and changes taking place. Two days after the meeting, Peter passed on information to the Board negotiators that he had learned at this meeting.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for speculation on future directions. Peter commented that: "The Government's insistence on cutting the funding for Kindergarten by 38 million is just a throwaway. They'll bring it back in a year or two to show they listened. I think this has been created as a screen for other, deeper changes. They have opened a real can of worms and there does not seem to be a real reason for doing so. They spill more than that in coffee a year."

While I observed Peter at this meeting I became very aware that he listened far more than he contributed. The others, with the exception of the newly appointed superintendent, engaged in more of the conversation than did Peter. I asked Peter about this observation and he said: "Yes that is about right. I want to share, and do, but I let the others do the talking." During subsequent observations of similar situations where Peter met with others I observed the same thing.

Peter used his contacts with other superintendents, including the Metro group to ascertain the correctness of information he received from other sources such as the Department official. Peter also used the

information to keep himself abreast of what other jurisdictions were doing or not doing for use in Glengarry.

A telephone conversation with the Board Chair.

This conversation took place when the Government had made clear that it was going to proceed with regionalization and amalgamation of school jurisdictions. The timeline had just been set and many trustees and others were worried about what would happen to their jurisdictions and their own positions in the new regions. I was able to listen to only one side of the telephone conversation. The general background was that apparently three or four trustees had had a meeting with the Deputy Minister about forming a different school district. Peter had been made aware of the meeting being held but not what was discussed. He was returning a voice message from the Chair. Peter's words are reported here with the Chair's replies noted by -----.

"What are you seething about? ----- What? ----- Oh, that's too bad. ------ When did this meeting take place? ----- Oh yah, you can bet on it! ----- mmm, ah. ----- Oh yes. ----- mmm ----- uh huh ----- Yeh, yes ---- Oh another little wrinkle ----- Yeah (Peter checks his calendar) ------ Yes, you did ----- Yes, ----- No ----- Did you hear? ------ What did she say? ----- Yes, I'll give it some thought. ----- Yes ------ No problem ----- We'll discuss it in _____. ------ Oh, she did. ----- Can't you get her to put a sock in her mouth for a while. ----- O.K. Yes I'll see you in _____ tonight."

In discussing this conversation with Peter he explained that the Chair had just heard about the meeting having taken place and was really angry with some of the other trustees for their actions. He

indicated that the Chair was venting his anger. He was able to confirm that the meeting had occurred and what had been discussed was as he had initially gathered. Peter's concluding comment to me was "That's done with now."

In these examples, Peter was acting as an information gatherer. He consistently probed for clarification of information and for confirmation of information received elsewhere. Peter used all of his contacts and opportunities to clarify what he was hearing. Peter would ask the contacts questions such as "What do you think about...?" or "Did you hear...?" The questions and subsequent answers formed part of Peter's information base.

Information Disseminator

Peter was an active disseminator of the information he gathered. For the purpose of this study an *information disseminator* is one who shares information with others. "If I was a betting man...." was a phrase that always indicated that what followed would be information that was important and perhaps of a confidential nature. Other times Peter was called upon to interpret policy to a parent, provide clarification of a Board decision to other staff, or to give background information to trustees as a meeting progressed. During the time that I observed Peter in this role I did not once see him refer to manuals, records, or other documentation in providing the information even when time to do so was available.

"If I were a betting man..."

Peter had been invited to address a staff meeting at one of the middle schools regarding the general state of education in the district

and the changes occurring in the system. Peter had taken an overhead he has used before to use in the presentation. The Principal had given Peter a set of questions that the staff has requested him to comment upon. Most dealt with the uncertainties surrounding regionalization and changes being implemented by the Province.

Peter began with compliments to the staff for the improved results by their school on the Provincial achievement tests. "Thank you for the hard work and dedication." As the presentation proceeded Peter referred to regionalization and to a question asked if the jurisdiction would have to merge with another by saying: "If I were a betting man I would put my money on our being joined by ------- next door." I know that this was agreed to two days before by the administrations and had not yet gone to either Board for ratification. A short time later, in answer to a question regarding possible changes in the relationship between the education and municipal functions in the District, again, Peter said: "If I were a betting man I'd say that by this fall, or earlier, the two parts will be permanently separated." I had been privy to information that this was to occur during the current legislative session of the Provincial Government and that the plans were already in place to proceed as soon as the legislation was passed.

This phrase appeared often in Peter's discussions. In conversation with a neighboring superintendent regarding regionalization: "If I were a betting man, I would say that our group is keen to get on with something." At a general staff meeting, again in reference to regionalization and the anticipated direction of the Board: "If I were a betting man...."

This phrase that Peter used provided a key to me as an observer. Peter had information that others wanted and Peter believed they should have but he was not in a position at the time to give a direct answer to a question. In addition, I observed that the response to his statements from others often provided him with even more information than he gave out.

Policy interpretation.

Peter was often in the position of having to provide interpretation of policies on a spur of the moment basis. The person requesting the interpretation could be anyone from staff, a trustee, to a member of the public. I did not observe Peter refer to any policy documents but he would reply from his own knowledge.

A telephone call from a parent concerned about the placement of her special needs child was one example that illustrated this role. Peter was able to explain not only the process but also the reasons for the decision having gone the way it did. He listened to the parental concern and made comments that kept the conversation flowing, reiterated the policy to the parent using the same terms and phrasing that I was able to check in the policy manual. This was done without reference to the manual or to documents. At the same time as Peter was on the telephone with the parent he also utilized the E-mail system to send a message to the Principal of the school identifying the parent, child, and concern. He also closed with an invitation to the parent to "call and let me know how it goes."

On another occasion a trustee confronted Peter with a question regarding the parameters of the budget. Peter was able to list the

parameters the Board had set and the justification for them. The meeting where this was done had been held some weeks before and I had never observed them discussed again.

Priority of information dissemination.

In the more formal aspects of the role of information disseminator, Peter was very conscious of priorities and protocol. An event occurred in the middle of the observation period, which showed clearly that Peter made sure that information, which needed to be given out to people, was handled in the proper order. The event was Peter's resignation to take a new position in another jurisdiction.

Peter met with the Assistant Superintendents first, then the Reeve and the Board Chair, this meeting was followed by one with the staff and immediately after that the rest of the Board was informed. He had requested that the jurisdiction he was joining not release the information until he had a chance to release the information himself.

The next day I asked Peter about the pattern of informing people of his decision. He replied:

> There was going to be a press release in _____ late Monday evening and I didn't want anyone finding out that way. The Super's team has been with me for a long time and they had to be first. It affects them more directly than anyone else. The Chair is important as he will have to deal with the trustees and I owe it to the Reeve because he has been a strong supporter of mine. I told the staff before the Board because once it goes to the Board everyone knows. The staff are more directly affected than the Board. They are the important ones.

In other situations Peter was careful to provide information to those who would be most affected. Peter stated he did not like surprises

and he was diligent in providing information if he could to others so they did not have surprises.

In his role as a disseminator of information, Peter was aware that he held a great deal of information that others needed or wanted. He also needed information that others had and so acted to share information in order to gain information.

Decision-maker

Peter, as superintendent of schools, was expected to have a major role as a *decision-maker*. The making of decisions in a complex organization can take many forms. I expected to observe Peter taking a decisive role in arriving at decisions. The observations showed him to seldom direct a decision but to have the groups arrive at consensus or to bring closure to a matter by stating the position he was prepared to adopt.

There were three instances that I observed where Peter's role as a decision-maker in the consensus model was apparent: at a Board meeting, at a Superintendent's team meeting, and through the strategic planning process for the District.

<u>The Board Meeting</u>.

The development and passage of the budget is a time when decisions are made that will determine the direction of the school district during the following year. The following observations were made during the week when the budget was being finally discussed by the Board prior to the passage of the budget document. These observations show Peter as a direct decision-maker.

Peter made the following statement in response to a budget question regarding the recovery of textbook losses by schools. "We can't go on. If it takes a harsh measure then that's the way. Site based management may take this. An alternative is the school is losing .5 of a teacher. I'm prepared to support anything." Peter did not make a decision on the matter of textbook losses but this statement was later acted upon by the Principals in creating a policy for charging students for text losses, which Peter supported before the Board.

On another point during the same meeting Peter brought closure to a debate that was ongoing over the funding of ECS. "We meet guidelines you gave us. I'm frustrated by this debate with proposed changes on how to allocate funds to specific goals." He was interrupted by a trustee who is opposed to the position that administration is taking. Peter listened to the trustee for a few minutes and then said: "Mister Chairman. We are here, with a fixed amount of money, and we present a plan to allocate this money following the parameters **you gave us** (emphasis intended)." This statement ended the debate and the item was passed without further debate.

The district has developed a carefully structured process for making decisions on budget. Peter was careful to keep the process in place when dealing with the trustees, who would often begin to get away from the process to pursue their own agendas. This guarding of the process was reflected in the Board debates and in other areas such as strategic planning. An example of Peter having to remind the trustees occurred when the Board was getting into making line-by-line comments on the budget. Peter stated:

> Please remember that we have a good system of allocation now. The Board gives direction to administration about how the total finances of the board are to be used to achieve the goals of the Board. Discussion of budget parameters on a line-by-line basis is asking for a zoo. We have to operate by principles. Therefore, I'm not prepared to discuss it today and we can review the process later.

The debate then returned to general principles of the budget.

The Superintendent's Team.

The Superintendent's team meeting was an opportunity for the administration to discuss plans, options, and strategies for dealing with the operation of the division. As presented elsewhere in this study, Peter seldom took extensive part in the deliberations. He let the other team members discuss ideas and debate alternatives and then brought the matter to a close with a decision. However, he guides the discussion with comments such as "I can live with that alternative."

The regular meeting of the team took place the morning prior to the final budget meeting. There were a large number of items that were discussed and decisions made. The meeting began at 9:05 a.m. and ended at 11:15 a.m. The following were some comments of Peter's that gave a flavor of his decision- making style.

Peter: "Cancopy? How is this to be paid and accounted for?" The group discussed some alternatives and took about three minutes to arrive at a consensus. Peter: "OK. Let's do it that way."

The Assistant Superintendent (Facilities) reported on anticipated enrollment changes and concerns that he anticipated would come forward at the Board meeting. Peter: "Just put it in as an information item. If they have questions we'll be prepared to answer but not get into a discussion."

Individuals raised small points about the budget. Peter listened to the points and then closed with "We'll make those changes. Does everyone agree?"

At the conclusion of the meeting Peter was the one who summarized the decisions the group had made. "Does that sound right? OK, That's what we'll go with."

On only one occasion was Peter observed to make a decision that did not have the consensus of the super's team. The decision dealt with the introduction of universal transportation fees. The other members of the team were much in favor of this as it would relieve some budget pressures. Peter explained:

> I can't live with that concept. We are a public education system that is supposed to give equal opportunity to everyone. This flies in the face of those principles. I will not go to the Board and give any support to that at all.

Later in the budget debate Peter again stated similar ideas.

In most discussions Peter seldom became involved in the debate. He raised an issue, question, or concern; let the other team members discuss; sought clarification; and then closed the discussion with a statement of what was to be done.

<u>The Strategic Planning Meeting</u>.

The strategic planning workshop was another arena where Peter's style of decision-making was evidenced. The workshop involved trustees, school and central office administrators, members of the public drawn from school councils, teachers, and student representatives. An outside facilitator conducted the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to develop the goals and directions for the Division for the coming year. Peter acted as a participant in the process. He did not take any direct role in the discussions or the proposals that emerged from the workshop. He moved from group to group during the workshop and listened to what was being discussed. Peter answered questions but kept away from direct involvement in the group deliberations. I noted two statements: one by the assistant superintendent leading the discussion group in which I participated, and one by Peter when reflecting on the outcome to me afterwards. The assistant superintendent said: "This is what I think Peter wants us to get done here." The general direction of the workshop and discussion had been discussed at the super's team meeting the previous week. In a follow up discussion with Peter he reflected on the progress the workshop had made and the goal statements that had been the product: "I'm really pleased with most of this stuff. Some of them will be a little sticky but we have a couple of opportunities to massage them in the quarterly reviews. I'll get them straightened out so we can deliver."

In these examples, Peter demonstrated a consistent style as a decision-maker. He was consistent in listening to others, seeking consensus, and then bringing the matter to a close. There were also principles that he believed in deeply that he was not prepared to breach.

Defender

The role of defender was one that Peter demonstrated over the entire period of the study. The term *defender* for this study is defined as a person who acts to defend others from attacks by people or groups

against whom they have no defense. Peter, as superintendent of schools, was in a position where he could address the Board or public on behalf of an individual. This often took the form of intervention to prevent subordinates from being attacked or put into a situation where they would be attacked. An example that illustrates the defender role was shown in a story Peter told me. The story involved a division budget. The budget for the year had been drawn up and the board had approved the package. Two days later the treasurer had come to Peter with the information that the revenue figures used in budget calculations were in error by "about one million." Peter said:

> I had to go to the Board and say that I had made an error and that these are the revised amounts. I didn't appreciate having to do it but it is necessary to protect the staff from the Board. They would have had the treasurer's head.

The Assistant Superintendent.

One of the assistant superintendents was making a presentation to the Board reviewing the parking policy for the schools in the division. The proposed policy, if passed, would highlight a long-standing problem of parking at one of the high schools. As the presentation progressed it became apparent that the Assistant Superintendent was becoming testy. Two trustees were attacking the policy proposal because of the negative impact on one high school. One trustee began to verbally "attack" the assistant superintendent by suggesting that the Board had been given insufficient information and that the assistant superintendent was withholding facts. Peter quietly moved from his usual seat and made his way to the presenter's table and sat beside the assistant superintendent. Peter then took over the answering of the questions and brought closure

to the matter by suggesting the matter be referred back to committee. When I asked Peter to reflect on this action afterwards he stated that:

> "_____" (the assistant superintendent) has a very short fuse. He was going to blow and get himself into a real jam. It wouldn't have helped anyone. I gave them (the board and the assistant superintendent) a chance to get out of it.

In this way Peter was able to defuse the situation and therefore defend the assistant superintendent from the trustees. Peter could speak directly to the trustees through the chair whereas subordinates are often vulnerable.

A Principal.

There had been a luncheon at the nearby community center for a visiting political leader. There had been a number of demonstrators outside the hall where the luncheon took place. The hall is located close to one of the secondary schools. When the dignitaries left the building and were going through the crowd a young person had shouted obscenities at them. The news had filtered back to the division office through some trustees who had been at the luncheon. The trustees wanted the Principal disciplined for allowing students to be there. Peter diffused the situation by saying:

> That was a very unfortunate incident and I'm embarrass[redacted] for the community that it happened but this was a public meeting and anyone could have attended. We don't know if the person was one of our students or even a student. I can't drag _____ (the principal of a high school) over the coals for something like this. I'll check into it further but I'm not sure the system should be involved.

The matter ended.

These two examples show Peter in the role of defending staff from the Board and accepting the responsibility of action on himself. When asked to reflect on this defense of others Peter replied that:

> I do it to protect people who can't defend themselves. I am the only one who can speak directly to the Board and I feel that I have enough respect and influence that I will be listened to even if they don't like it.

Negotiator

The action of negotiation was an activity that Peter engaged in on an ongoing basis. The term *negotiator* is defined in this study as one who engages in discussion and actions to achieve goals or a desired outcome.

There was one significant meeting in which Peter negotiated the terms of the joining of the division with a neighboring jurisdiction. The circumstances and discussion of the meeting were very confidential and took place in Peter's office after all of the staff, including the assistant superintendents, had left for the day. Peter met with administration representatives of the smaller jurisdiction, the municipal administrator, and myself as an observer.

The discussion involved the basic terms of the union and the process of how it would be carried out. Peter was very careful to state that this had to go to the Board for ratification and that these discussions were not binding. "If I were a betting man my Board will accept that but there's always a chance someone will object." Peter also was careful to protect the human interests in the negotiations. "We have

to be sure that both of our people are protected and reassured that there will be no staff cuts." and then "I can sympathize with the worries your people have about being swallowed up by us."

On reflection about the meeting afterwards, I noted that Peter did not say a great deal. Others spoke at much greater length and with more forcefulness than had Peter. Peter was often the mediator in the discussions. He stated the position of the division at the onset and then let the others wrangle over the details. Peter summed up the understanding at the end.

When I asked Peter to reflect on these negotiations he stated that: "We are in the driver's seat here. We'll get everything we want so I can afford to be generous. The Board will do what we tell them on this and the other division will be glad to be with us. Their other choices are not very pleasant."

Peter provided guidance to the other staff on negotiations in which they were engaged. He had been a negotiator in teacher bargaining earlier in his career as both a teacher representative and later from the Board side. "It's important for each side to think they have won something. You get nowhere beating each other up over and over again." Peter did not become directly involved in negotiations that were carried out during the observation period by other administration team members. Salary negotiations were ongoing during this time and Peter remained out of the direct negotiations.

Another example of the advisory, but still somewhat directive, nature of Peter's involvement as a negotiator was observed. Peter went down the hall to meet with the Director of Policy and Research. They

discussed the design of a survey and research project that was underway. The Director favored a very narrow scope for the committee membership as an alternative to having Board involvement at this time although he has considered a broad membership. Peter suggested a broader committee. He would like to see a parent and a Board member on the committee. Peter went on to explain his reasons. "I would rather have the Board input before the case rather than after." Peter continued: "I'll arrange for the Board representative and the parent so that we don't have any loose cannons messing up your life on this. How about _____? (names a trustee). She'll be good on this." The director accepted Peter's suggestion.

I asked Peter about these negotiation observations and he stated: "You can't hold people responsible for results if you tell them how to do it! If you tell them how to do it then the only thing they are responsible for is to do it that way and not the results."

Spokesman

A *spokesman* is a person who speaks on behalf of the organization to the various publics that the organization serves. Peter, as Superintendent of Schools, was expected to carry out this function for the Board. It was specifically noted as one of the roles the Superintendent was to carry out. The role was shared with the Chair of the Board who was the official spokesman for the system.

Peter acted as a spokesman for the Board when speaking to various publics about the Boards directions. When he explained the direction the Board was taking in policy to a staff meeting, when he spoke to a parent about a decision that had been made, as he was

interviewed about the budget for the local media, or when Peter addressed a local service club about the successes of the school system, he was speaking as a spokesman for the Board or the school system.

Peter was invited to address the staff of one of the middle schools. He used an overhead transparency to guide his comments. During the session and the question and answer period that followed, Peter explained the various directions the Board had taken on issues. In answer to a question about provincial testing, Peter stated: "The Board is very firm that we will have improved achievement test results in the division." When asked to comment on the implementation of school strategic plans and their meshing with the Board's plan, Peter replied: "We have achieved many of the things in the strategic plan and the Board is supportive of that."

When dealing with parents Peter was often the person called to explain a decision made by the Board or by administration. In providing these explanations Peter was never heard giving a direct yes or no for an answer. The answers were always couched with terms such as: "I don't think so but I'll have someone get back to you for sure" in answer to a question about a special needs student or "That is an interesting suggestion. We'll have to address that at the budget discussions next year" to a suggestion that the system could save money by contracting out supplies. When I sought clarification of this style of answer Peter said: "There are never any absolutes in this business. You never know all the sides. It's better to leave with the impression that there is hope."

The local media contacted Peter for comment on various decisions of the Board. Reporters were in attendance at all public Board meetings

and often asked Peter for clarification of issues. The division had a communications officer who drafted media releases. Peter always checked the material before it went out to the public. When talking to the media about the budget that had been passed, Peter highlighted the Board's achievement. "The Board had some very hard decisions to make and made them very well.... The Board's budget reflects the best interests of the students in Glengarry." "The budget follows the goals that the Board set out in its strategic plan.... Administration will be able to follow the leadership of the Board that is shown in the budget." These comments were made in a telephone interview with Peter that was recorded for use by a local radio station. I asked Peter about the interview and if he would listen to it. "I never listen to those things. I just have to be sure to give no answers that can be misinterpreted. If they are I can say I was misquoted."

Peter was invited to address a local service club about the state of education in the division. He used the same overhead transparency to guide him as he used previously with the middle school staff. The message, however, was somewhat different to this group. He focused on the board and the strategic planning that the division used. The spokesman role here was directed at stressing the success of the school system and the Board.

> We have good people who are working very hard to develop the best educational system in the province.... The Board is working under very difficult constraints to be as efficient as possible with shrinking dollars from the province.

Peter did not dwell on the negatives but highlighted the achievements.

One aspect of Peter in the role of spokesman that I observed was his public speaking. In general, Peter was comfortable in front of audiences he was familiar with such as the Board, school staffs, and parent groups. He was nervous when speaking to groups that could be critical of him or the system: a service club, a presentation to a large group of central office people, such as superintendents, or to a group of graduate students at the university.

The comfort was illustrated best when Peter spoke to a school staff. As an introduction to the presentation began, Peter was telling a few stories when he tripped over the cord of the overhead projector pulling out the plug. He stopped. "Damn machines just get in the way." He got down on his hands and knees, crawled a few feet under the table, plugged in the projector, stood up and continued on talking without missing a beat.

The nervousness was apparent to me in a presentation to a group of superintendents. I had, by this time, observed Peter in many circumstances, and the presentation occurred near the end of the observation period. From the opening remarks right through the two hour presentation I noticed Peter's hands shaking and his voice, usually strong, had a bit of a quaver. He relied on notes for this presentation, as he did for other presentations where I noted nervousness, much more than at times when he spoke with familiar groups. In reflecting on the observed nervousness, Peter replied: "I get nervous sometimes before a tough audience but it goes away. Public speaking is not one of my favorite activities."

As a spokesman, Peter's role was constrained by the fact that he could speak on behalf of the Board and yet was not officially the spokesman of the Board. That role was the Chair's. Peter's role seemed to be guided by a rule of "give the politicians their credit and let them talk if they want to."

Cheerleader and Flag bearer

These two roles were initially separated but as the analysis progressed it became apparent that these two roles were so closely intertwined that they had to be kept together. A *cheerleader* is a person who vocally supports the team and a *flag bearer* is a person who carries the symbols of the organization into the public. Peter did this continually and, in many ways, this dual role provided the key to his personality and style.

Peter tried to attend one major function at each school through out the year. There were twenty-seven schools and thirty-eight weeks in the school year so he had about one visit a week for the year. However, the events were often grouped so that there might be two or three events in one week and none in others. He also tried to visit each school as often as he can for other reasons. Principal evaluations, invitations to speak to staff or parents, and tours of facilities were all opportunities for Peter to praise and give support to individuals in the system. Peter had a tremendous faculty for remembering names of people and he used this to speak to people on a first name basis. This was accomplished in spite of the size of the system. What follows are some examples of Peter as a cheerleader and flag bearer.

We were attending a parent advisory council meeting at one of the elementary schools. The principal of the school was retiring at the end of the year. As we drove to the meeting Peter says: "Mr. _____ has had a rough year. He's a good principal but I've had difficulty with him in the past. He does things his own way and a couple of times I've had to order him to follow a division decision. I don't like to have to do that." The meeting went without incident but afterwards the principal accompanied Peter out to the door. The principal thanked Peter for his support. "I know we've had our differences but you're one person I'll miss." He had tears in his eyes and then Peter gave him a pat on the shoulder and said: "You've done a wonderful job. I'll miss you."

We were going into a junior high school to meet with staff. As we go into the building the janitor is in the hallway. Peter: "Hi, John. The school sure looks good." Janitor: Hello Mr. _____, we do our best." Peter: "Keep it up everyone appreciates it." I was walking some steps behind Peter and could not help noticing the pleased smile on the custodian's face. Later in the same visit during the question and answer session with the staff of about thirty teachers I observed that Peter knew everyone's name and used the name to answer the questions. "That's a good question, Harry." "Yes, Mary, we'll have to look at that." This was a particularly remarkable feat in that Peter was not involved in the hiring or placement of teaching or support staff.

Sometimes the role interfered with Peter's personal life. "I'm going to the art show at _____ Elementary because it's too cold to go to the ball game as I'd like to do." Peter was an avid golfer and curler. During a conversation about his recreation Peter said: "I used to take part in all

kinds of sports but now there is just not enough time to be a member of a golf club or curling league. I can never be sure that I can make it to play." Peter still followed the provincial curling events as well as hockey, baseball, and football but "just as a spectator, on TV. I'd really like to get out more to games."

The role of cheerleader and flag bearer was important to Peter. During the observation period Peter attended a high school play, two school suppers, two parent advisory meetings where he made presentations, two school staff meetings where he made presentations, an elementary school art show, one show of high school art at the community center, an elementary school tea, two awards ceremonies, and a high school graduation. The scheduling of these visits was part of the first Super's team meeting agenda at the beginning of each month. The graduations, Christmas concerts, school plays and other functions were scheduled so that Superintendent or one of the Assistants was at every one. Peter explained: "It is important that we get out to the schools and be seen to be interested. They appreciate it and we get a chance to meet and talk to people."

Not all requests for Peter's attendance received the same treatment. "I won't go to junior high 'graduations'. I don't believe in them and I won't go."

One aspect of Peter as a cheerleader and flag bearer was made clear to me on many occasions when I accompanied Peter to schools. He would describe the school to me as we went over to the building. He would explain the way the building had been constructed, difficulties with the construction or design, some of the history of the place, and the

people who worked in the school. Through all these conversations Peter's pride in the division's accomplishments was evident.

During the observation period Peter consistently acted the part of the cheerleader and flag bearer for the division. He did this for both internal and external audiences.

Discussion of the Roles

Although the roles Peter played during the observation period have been divided into separate entities for this presentation, these roles intertwine with each other, overlapping and reinforcing the cumulative role of the superintendent of schools as played by Peter. All of the roles were being played at the same time. The division into separate roles for presentation allows for the description of each facet in greater detail.

An attempt was made to focus the study on what is the *reality* of Peter's work life. As such, the roles that emerged more closely resemble those of Moylan's (1988) principal Evelyn Green than the formalized roles describe in much of the literature such as Murphy (1994), Allison (1989), Green (1988), or Braithwaite (1988). I attempted to show what Peter *did* during the time I observed.

A cumulative quality of Peter's role could be summed up as that of a teacher. A *teacher* is one who explains, demonstrates states, facilitates, and instructs others. He continually did this in his presentations and interactions with others. One example was when I asked how he handled the pressure of the Board meeting and the attacks by trustees. He went to his white board in the office, drew a diagram, and said:

> "I used to get really upset about trustee's actions. I've learned to deal with the stress by understanding that those actions are to be expected and therefore I'm not bothered by them."

He drew a sketch and continued:

> "By reducing the difference between what I expect them to do and what they actually do I control my stress in the situation. Therefore if I don't expect people to act differently than they do, I can handle the situation."

Gmelch (1996) commented in a similar manner that superintendents need to control the stress that is a part of the position. Peter intuitively was in control of the stress that he had in his work life.

This finding, that the teacher qualities are ingrained in Peter's work, would tend to support the idea that work of the superintendent of schools does require a person who is a teacher.

Synthesis of the Themes

As I reflected upon the data that were presented in Chapters 4 and 5 a number of aspects of Peter's work related directly to my own experiences and work.

1. The constant struggle of Peter to preserve his personal life as separate from the work life is important. Not once during the observation period was Peter's wife in evidence. His jealous guardianship of his weekends was part of this struggle.

2. The Peter held very strong personal beliefs about education as a service in the public good and the impact this has on his work is not conveyed.

3. The high value Peter placed on loyalty and friendship was an important aspect of his personality and style in the work place.

4. The pace of the day and the variety of activities that characterized Peter's day were an important factor in Peter's work life. I found that I was often exhausted by the end of the day. I was not the one engaged in the discussion, debate, or activities. Doing that had to be much more tiring. It was difficult to convey the pressure of the activities on a single person.

5. It is interesting that Peter seldom displayed anger or frustration in public. His control of his personal feelings was one of the important aspects of his work. The exceptions to this were during Board meetings where Peter would let his feelings show with his intonation and body language. Peter was a gentleman in even what I perceived to be difficult situations.

6. It was at the completion of the data presentation that I began to see that I had come to understand Peter's work life from my perspective as an administrator of a school.

The work life appeared in many ways to be similar to my own but on a larger scale. My own situation requires me to fill the same roles in my school as Peter does at the District level. I am called upon to gather information from outside, disseminate the information to others, defend staff and students, make decisions, negotiate, speak on behalf of the school organization, cheer and wave the flag. The connection between my own work life and how I came to view Peter's work was important to me.

Summary

Chapter 5 described the roles Peter portrayed during the study. The roles were defined and the findings supporting the role were

presented. Peter's roles as information gatherer, disseminator, defender, decision-maker, negotiator, spokesman, and cheerleader and flag bearer were discussed. The chapter also included a discussion of the roles and my reflections on the findings.

Chapter 6 presents a summary of the findings. The chapter will provide answers to the four research questions. Implications for practice and for further research will be presented.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the study. The detailed findings are included in Chapters 4 and 5. The chapter includes answers to the four research questions that guided the study, and concludes with some considerations of the implications of the study for practice and further research.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to describe the work life of the Superintendent of Schools for the Glengarry School District. The study focused upon the activities and roles that characterize the work life of Peter as the person in this position. The study revealed a person who was a competent, dedicated, and determined superintendent of schools. Peter demonstrated the roles of information gatherer, information disseminator, defender, decision-maker, negotiator, spokesman, and cheerleader and flag bearer consistently throughout the study.

The Roles

These are the roles Peter consistently demonstrated during the study. Each role is defined for the purposes of the study and examples given.

Information Gatherer - one who actively seeks information about events, plans, actions, and directions of other people or organizations, which may affect the organization's activities. Peter demonstrated this role when he interacted with the Deputy Minister, the Metro Superintendent's group, and with the Chairman of the Board.

Information disseminator - one who shares information with others. Peter acted in this role when he spoke to school staffs, central office staff and the Board.

Defender - one who acts to defend others from attacks by people or organizations against whom they have no defense. Peter demonstrated the role of defender with the assistant superintendent and the principal.

Negotiator - one who engages in discussion and actions to achieve goals or a desired outcome. Peter demonstrated skill as a negotiator in dealing with the terms of regionalization, providing guidance to the collective bargaining, group and with the Director of Research.

Spokesman - one who speaks on behalf of the organization to the various publics that the organization serves. Peter demonstrated this role in speaking to a school staff meeting, with a parent, with the local media, and to the service club.

Cheerleader and Flag bearer - one who vocally supports the organization and carries the symbolic representation of the organization to the public. Peter demonstrated these roles to schools.

In Peter's work life the roles become so interconnected that it is very difficult to separate them into the individual strands. He was constantly engaged in gathering and disseminating information, defending individuals and the organization, making and influencing decisions, negotiating, acting as a spokesman, and cheering the members of the organization. Peter acted, for the organization, as a leader who primarily was a teacher for the organization. A teacher has been defined as one who explains, demonstrates states, facilitates actions, and instructs others. Peter's work life was consistently one of

explaining alternatives, demonstrating alternatives, stating positions, facilitating the work of others in the organization, and instructing others in ways of approaching the problems they faced.

Peter had developed his style over his career. He had taken University training in school administration and had been active in inservice activities during his career but much of his work life was an outgrowth of his personality and on the job experiences. The outcome of this study would suggest that the work life of the superintendent of schools is similar to that of a teacher or the principal of a school. The teacher or principal interacts with a large number of individuals and groups on a regular and continual basis often in a very fragmented way. They must retain the connections between a great deal of information and actions. Each has to have an intimate knowledge of the organization and its members in order to function.

Peter demonstrated a great faith in people. He accepted that they made mistakes and accepted that as part of the work. He believed that people would try to do their best and his work life operated on that premise. Peter's comments about principals, trustees, and others indicated that he recognized their humanness and their strengths and weaknesses.

The Research Questions

The study was guided by four questions presented in Chapter One. This section presents the answers to those questions based upon the findings of the study.

1) What is the work life of the superintendent?

The observations of Peter's work life confirmed much of the literature such as Duignan (1979); Allison (1989); Genge (1991); Murphy (1994) and others which points to the domination of the interaction between the superintendent and other people through formal meetings, informal meetings, and other communication. Much of Peter's time was spent in communicating with others on a face to face basis or through voice - mail and e - mail. The work life of Peter is *communicating.*

2) What activities and interactions form the substance of the Superintendent's work life?

Peter's work life was dominated by a continual and varied interaction of people and information. As superintendent, Peter was constantly gathering, confirming, and disseminating information to a great number of people. His work life was a series of often brief and disjointed events through out the day. One minute he was discussing the placement of an individual student with a parent, a few minutes later talking about the impacts of a government policy change on a multi-million dollar budget, and then trying to fathom what direction the trustees might take on a policy issue. The substance of Peter's work life was communication and information.

3) What does it mean to be a Superintendent of Schools and Chief Executive Officer of the Board?

The superintendent of schools is the single person who bears the responsibility for the operation of a multi-million dollar educational organization. The nature of the organization requires that the superintendent possess intimate, detailed, and correct knowledge of all aspects of the organization and be able to process, synthesize, and use

this knowledge in many diverse circumstances. The Board and the public expect the superintendent to be able to answer questions and make informed decisions regarding every aspect of the operation from student placement to provincial government intentions. The superintendent is also at the point of interaction between the professional educational side of the organization and the public, political aspect of the organization. He or she therefore has to be aware of the implications of actions both educationally and politically. Peter continually displayed these capabilities.

4) What roles characterize the work life of the Superintendent as the Chief Executive officer of the Board?

The roles played by the superintendent of schools, as demonstrated by Peter, were information gatherer, information disseminator, defender, decision-maker, negotiator, spokesman, and cheerleader and flag bearer. These roles were blended by Peter as he carried out his duties day-to-day as the Superintendent of Schools for the Glengarry School District.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The study points to some areas that need to be considered in the preparation and recruitment of people for the superintendency. Much of the skill that Peter demonstrated in his role as the superintendent pointed to the need for people who have a high degree of tolerance for diversity in their work. Because of the diversity of the work the superintendent does the incumbent needs to be able to shift from one role to another almost instantly. The person occupying the superintendent's office needs a great deal of stamina to undertake the

long hours of work and the pressures that are placed upon them by the divergent needs of the office. This study, and my experience from observing Peter, would indicate that much of the skill and the abilities Peter displayed in his work were developed gradually through Peter's own work experience and his own personality. Peter may have been the superintendent he was due to a combination of personality and his experiences in various educational roles and in municipal politics. No doubt there are academic influences that have shaped Peter's views of the practice of educational administration, but in the day to day activities he needed the insights and knowledge drawn from his experience.

Peter developed his style of work through a long period of gradually expanded experiences. How may this experiential learning be duplicated in a program designed to develop candidates for the superintendency? Such a program would need to recognize that a superintendent like Peter needs to develop through an increase in responsibilities and experience garnered from actually working in the various tasks of school and school division administration. I would suggest that practical work experience followed by reflection and discussion of the experience might serve in some way to accomplish this end. Another suggestion might be to design a practicum program or internship program for candidates for the superintendency.

Implications for research

The role of the superintendent of schools is changing rapidly in Alberta as elsewhere. This study was limited to one superintendent in a

position of security and stability. There are a number of possibilities for further research that could be explored:

1. The work life of another superintendent in another jurisdiction may provide different insights than the ones reported here.

2. The work life of a superintendent at another stage in his or her career would broaden the thinking on the work of individuals.

3. Further study into the use of intuitive knowledge by superintendents in their work life.

4. The impact of decentralization of decision making on the roles of the superintendent of schools.

5. An investigation of the personalities of individuals that occupy the superintendent's office should shed light on the position.

6. The impact of the demands of the office on the personal lives of incumbents is worthy of further study.

7. An investigation into what criteria are valued in candidates for the superintendency is warranted.

8. Success of programs for recruiting, training, and mentoring future superintendents needs to be investigated.

9. The relationships between the superintendent and the Board and individual trustees is indicated.

These are some possibilities this study suggested for further research. The role of the superintendent of schools is evolving constantly and so there is an ongoing need to understand this most pivotal of roles in education.

Concluding Comments

Peter's willingness and openness made this study possible. His dedication to the work of public education and his willingness to share his world with me is one for which I am truly grateful. As I reflect on the work life I have presented here I believe that Peter is one of many people who work diligently for the education of students and the betterment of education in this province. The trials of change, reduced resources, public pressure, and the myriad of other issues facing educators can be handled and handled effectively. Peter demonstrated that and for that vision and hope, I am inspired.

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Appendix A

A Typical Day

A Typical Day

8:30 a.m. Peter has not arrived as yet. He has been at his Service Club breakfast meeting.

8:35 a.m. Reeve comes into the office looking for Peter. She tells Pat that she wants to speak to Peter about a clarification of a budget matter from yesterday.

8:40 a.m. Peter arrives in the office and greets everyone quite jovially. He is very relaxed. Checks his calendar for additions since yesterday. There were none. "Great, I can get some things done around here."

8:43 a.m. Phone call from reporter seeking clarification of budget items. Peter comments on how pleased he was with the budget and the things that the Board has achieved in the face of government cuts. The comments were recorded and will be used on the radio. Peter never listened to the reporter's interview on the radio.

8:50 a.m. Peter works at his desk. He skims articles and sorts in-box items. Peter saves some by putting notes to Pat regarding filing of the material. He makes a comment to me that "I never have time to read all this stuff as I would like to but I save everything because I'm a bit of a packrat." Shortly after he says this, Peter proceeds to discard a number of articles.

8:54 a.m. Pat comes in to seek clarification of a note Peter was sending to a principal in response to a policy question. Pat will prepare the response and send it out.

8:56 a.m. A brief voice message to all trustees congratulating them for the passage of the budget.

8:58 a.m. Call to the Reeve indicating he will be in the office and for her to call.

8:59 a.m. Peter returns to his papers.

9:01 a.m. Pat comes in to confirm the school entry age policy for a parent who has called the Superintendent seeking an answer. Pat indicates that the person has already called a school and was probably hoping for a different answer.

9:06 to 9:14 a.m. Phone call from a parent regarding the placement of her child in a special program for the next year. This leads to Peter having to explain the policies regarding placements of students and payment for private school placements. This was done without reference to the Policy Manual or other documentation. Promises to have a firm answer to her concerns by next week.

9:15 a.m. Sends an E-mail message regarding this call to Assistant Superintendent (Instruction).

9:16 a.m. Sends a voice message to the Chairman responding to her request for a lobbying proposal for ECS and the legality of using other funds to sponsor non-mandated programs.

9:18 a.m. Janice (Assistant Superintendent, Instruction) comes in to seek clarification of ECS transportation organization procedures. "Can Noreen give them a hand before she leaves?" Noreen was leaving the system at the end of the year. "We're getting a great deal of concern over how to organize this transportation. Principals and local advisory councils need guidance." Janice remains standing for the discussion (4 minutes). Peter says "You and Ted get together so the messages are consistent."

9:30 a.m. Parent leader of the ECS lobby group comes in and discusses the procedures for approaching the government about funding cuts to ECS.

9:35 a.m. Peter returns call to a principal regarding a student suspension and the principal's action in the matter. "That is fine with me. You followed the procedure. Good."

9:38 a.m. Peter leaves office to seek clarification of the student placement (previous phone call). He leaves the Executive suite and personally seeks the information. Along the way he greets staff and offers thanks for work on the budget.

9:42 a.m. He returns to his office and immediately leaves again. Quick drop in on Tom (Assistant Superintendent, Facilities). The conversation was brief. "That was a good meeting (budget) yesterday. Now we can get on with the work we have to do."

9:43 a.m. Communications officer speaks to Pat about the material Peter had requested. She suggests he show it to Peter directly.

9:45 a.m. Peter returns to his office. Pat says that the Communications officer wanted to show him something and Peter goes to see him and gives his approval to the document.

9:46 a.m. Peter returns to the office and says to me "Let's go for coffee. I haven't been for coffee in a long time." He gets his jacket and then remembers something about the press release and goes to the Communications office.

9:53 a.m. Peter is still discussing the press release. A staff officer comes into see Peter and Pat says she'll pass on the message.

9:55 a.m. Peter comes into the reception area and the Board Chairman catches him with some questions. They spend four minutes in the reception area talking about various matters.

9:59 a.m. Peter goes into his office and mutters under his breath, "....Chairman."

10:00 a.m. We actually leave for the coffee room. Peter and I keep the conversation on non-business matters. The conversation was interrupted by people who come in greeting Peter. He does not finish his coffee.

10:17 a.m. Peter is back at his desk and turns to the E-mail messages on the computer. He reads and responds to five messages.

10: 23 a.m. Peter turns to paperwork. Reads and signs material that he was required to authorize.

10:32 Peter comments to me about the appointment of a superintendent to a position in another, larger jurisdiction. Peter comments that, "He will do a good job there."

10:34 Picks up the phone and calls a neighboring Superintendent. Leaves a message for the person to call him back.

10:38 The secretary brings in a faxed message for Peter and Peter immediately calls the neighboring Superintendent who originated the message. Peter shares his position on the timing and other information regarding the impending regionalization of their two Boards. Peter seeks information on other topics through questions. They share insights on the views of various trustees and politicians in the area. The conversation was very much in the manner of a perception check on what they had heard or read from other sources. "Did you understand

her to mean...?" or "Do you think he meant...?" " I heard him to say...." Peter asks more questions than he gives answers for. The call lasts until 10:45 with Peter listening most of the time.

10:45 Reads and makes notes at the desk.

10:50 Peter turns to writing letters of reference for a number of people who have requested early retirement from the district. Peter comments that: "Some were easy to do but others require carefully chosen words." He handwrites the letters and gives the notes to Pat to type.

10:53 Peter glances at an article in a journal, makes a note about it and puts it into the out basket for Pat to copy and distribute to the Assistant Superintendents. He continues to glance at the journals and other articles. Quick decisions were made as to disposition: garbage or file. Peter mentions that much of what he gets was already prescreened by Pat.

11:05 Peter goes down the hall to see the staff member in charge of special services to discuss the student placement of the child of the parent who called this morning. When he gets to the office, Peter shares what he had told the parent and shares his perception of what the parent wants and her general attitude about the alternatives. They discuss the alternatives very briefly. Peter tells the staff officer that he said that they would be back to the parent today. He leaves it in the staff officer's hands.

They then go on to other topics and the staff officer gives Peter an update on a ministerial review committee investigating a placement decision. Who was testifying from the division and strategy for coordinating the information being presented was discussed. Peter was aware of and kept

abreast of the process but was not directly involved. He single comment was: "That sounds good."

11:15 to 11:34 Peter returns to his office and continues with paper work. Works at his desk. Peter sends three messages on E-mail, makes two phone calls in response to messages and leaves messages that he returned the calls. Pat comes in to get a word on one letter clarified and another secretary comes in to hand Peter a note. The secretaries do not knock but come into the office without formality.

11:34 Pat calls in that the Assistant Superintendent (Personnel) was on the phone indicating that two people were in his office and could Peter come down to see them. Peter immediately leaves and goes to Personnel. I do not go with him. While Peter was gone the Treasurer comes in to see Peter. He leaves a note on the desk regarding budget calculations and alternatives.

11:55 Peter returns and his expression is "grim." He says: "There were some really tough decisions being made in Personnel and there are, and will be more, very unhappy people because of what we have to do."

12:03 Communication officer comes in with a question of clarification for Peter. He leaves a faxed copy of administration appointments from a nearby jurisdiction.

12:04 Peter reads and comments on some of the names that were on the faxed copy of administrative appointments. "He'll do a good job." "I wonder about this one. He may be in over his head."

12:07 Peter answers the telephone because the secretaries are away for lunch.

12:10 Peter leaves the building for lunch and returns at 1:08. He has met with his accountant about income tax. As soon as he sits down he receives a telephone call from a radio station requesting additional comments to the ones he made this morning.

1:18 Peter goes out of office and clarifies some points with the secretary in response to her questions about his draft letters.

1:20 Peter goes to the Assistant Superintendent (Facilities) office to discuss and clarify some small points on two projects that were underway.

1:25 Peter returns to his desk and looks through an article that has been placed in the reading basket, skims the article, and marks it to be filed.

1:35 The radio station calls back again. Peter makes some very brief comments and then he returns to the computer and paper work.

1:50 A reporter from a local newspaper calls with some quick questions for Peter regarding the budget.

1:51 Peter back at desk work. The secretary brings in a file for review.

2:01 Communication Officer brings in brochures that he has prepared for Peter regarding a provincial workshop that Peter was organizing.

2:10 Peter goes out and instructs his secretary to inform the person who made the presentation requesting his support for a fundraising idea that he will not provide a letter of recommendation to her. "I'm a bit ticked that she even asked for one. My position makes these requests difficult because by giving my recommendation the perception of others may be that I want this done."

2:17 to 2:06. Peter takes a phone call from a former colleague about a workshop. They reminisce for a few minutes. Peter goes out to get material mentioned in the call. He asks his secretary to check the name of a person who was the speaker at a meeting that Peter had attended.
2:27 Peter makes call to a Principal and leaves a voice mail message for him to call regarding a workshop presentation.
2:40 The treasurer comes in with information in anticipation of questions that might be asked by the Board regarding the budget. "Since this is their last kick at it."
2:43 Peter sends a voice mail message to the Chairman with an item to add to the Board meeting agenda regarding a teacher who was being recognized for a Provincial Teaching Award.
2:46 Board secretary comes in and they discuss when to do the recognition and some alternatives for it. This item came up at the Superintendent's team meeting. They discuss possible dates that Peter will be available. Peter leaves it in the hands of Board Secretary.
2:49 Sends a voice mail to the Chairman to disregard the previous message and explains that the presentation will be at another board meeting.
2:56 A trustee calls to confirm a luncheon meeting with Peter.
2:59 Peter comments that he was starting to see his desk top. "It is nice to have a day with no scheduled meetings to get caught up on this 'crap'. This is so unusual."
3:17 Peter calls the hotel where the Provincial Superintendents' meeting is to take place to see if the Provincial president of the Superintendents' Association has checked in. He has, and Peter has a brief social

conversation. Peter says: "I have the workshop brochures ready and will be there at registration to distribute them."

3:25 Peter calls the superintendent of the neighboring jurisdiction with whom Glengarry may regionalize. "If I were a betting man I would say our group was keen to get on with something."

3:27 A County councilor who was not on the school board comes in and Peter goes over the general ideas in the budget. Peter answers questions and notes the concerns of the councilor.

3:40 Peter gets ready for the meeting.

3:50 Peter moves to the Council chambers. Social chat with various people in the chamber. There is no stress here as this meeting is only a formality of Budget adoption by the Council.

4:10 Reeve opened the meeting with a comment that this will likely be the last time that a meeting like this will occur because the governance structure was about to change radically.

There was a point raised that two of the trustees at large, both of whom had concerns about aspects of the budget, were not present. Both Peter and the Chair indicate that these people were informed and the Reeve directs the Secretary to note that they were informed of the time and place of the meeting.

Peter gives a brief recap of the budget. Some questions were asked and statements made. Two of the questions in public had been asked in private, before the meeting, by the councilor not on the Board. Peter gives the answers to the questions.

The vote is quick and the budget is formally adopted.

5:10 The meeting is adjourned and Peter quickly leaves the building and goes home.

6:45 Peter returns from home for the Annual General Meeting. He engages in social conversations with various people as he moves into the meeting.

7:00 Annual General meeting convenes. Peter sits with the Municipal Chief Administrative Officer.

7:05 The motion to adopt the Budget is put forward and very quickly passed without debate.

7:10 The education portion of the meeting is over and Peter leaves for the evening.

Appendix B

A Typical Board Meeting

A Typical Board Meeting

8:15 a.m. Peter arrives and checks his mail and messages.

8:20 Calls each of the Assistant Superintendents in turn to check if there is anything new.

8:30 Chair comes into Peter's office for a private meeting.

8:55 Peter goes into the Board room. Peter greets individual trustees and engages in social chat.

9:00 Meeting called to order by the Chair. Peter is seated in his usual seat (Fig. 2).

9:02 A member of the local Ministerial Association is introduced to offer an invocation.

9:03 Agenda is amended by additions and deletions. Peter adds two items regarding a meeting with the Deputy Minister and a Transportation Liaison Committee and requests one deletion of a presentation because of bereavement.

9:05 Adoption of Minutes. One trustee has five errors, omissions or changes he wants to the Minutes.

9:08 Motion to go in camera. The discussion here is much more free and the questions and answers are more forthright than during the open meeting where some of the same issues are discussed. One trustee notes that the matter under discussion should now be continued in public.

9:23 Chair's report. This consists of listing meetings attended and results or information from these meetings. He heard that there is a plan to divide the division up under regionalization and he heard it from a

neighboring trustee. Instructs Peter to find out the source of the information.

9:25 Superintendent's Report. Peter moves to the presenter's table but remains on his feet to deliver the report.

- Peter begins by reporting on exemplary items from schools: The Provincial results for the first semester are in and show a positive trend in achievement and the overall average is up by seven percent in the District.
- A Teacher in the division has been awarded an Excellence in Teaching Award.
- One school is having a Fine Arts Festival and trustees are invited to attend.
- Two Elementary Schools are beginning a collaborative program involving parents, staff, students and community to set up a peer support system.

Peter publicly responds to a statement regarding a matter raised in the chair's report. Peter says: "In regards to the sources of the information people have I will not ask them where it came from. However, I will try and find out from my own sources how true it is. I won't give you my sources and I don't expect you'll give me all of yours."

Peter reminds the Board they have a Workshop on regionalization coming up and there is a good chance that the Associate Deputy Minister will be there to answer questions. "This will be a chance to find out the answers right from the source."

Peter reports on a sensitive situation at one of the elementary schools and indicates what has been done by the Principal and the staff and what is being planned for in the future.

9:35 Peter ends his report and returns to his seat. Other administrators make their reports with Peter listening and making brief notes but he is not involved.

9:58 to 10:06 Trustee's concerns are voiced regarding a political demonstration that occurred yesterday involving some students. Peter makes notes of voiced trustee concerns. He has already checked the principal's action by telephone. Peter raises his hand to be recognized by the chair and says: "Ladies and gentlemen. This was a very unfortunate event. I have already spoken to the Principal of -------- School and he is following up. Be aware, however, that you don't even know if the person was a student or if he was that he was even from one of our schools. Don't be so quick to jump to conclusions. The principal can't control everyone all the time. I don't expect them to run their schools like prisons. Students can come and go for any number of reasons. The parents should be the ones more concerned." Promises to check for clarification at the request of one trustee.

10:07 - 10:22 A break is called and various trustees begin to check for information again with Peter and other administration. During the break, Peter discusses the procedure for handling the notices of motion with the Board Secretary and the Chairman. Peter assists the chair with the procedures for the motions. He suggests alternative ways the Board could deal with them. "This is what is needed here....You have to have

this passed before this is brought forward....Remember that this is an amendment and needs to be debated and voted first...."

10:23 Meeting is called back to order. Peter is in his chair at the front. The trustees debate on a contentious budget issue. Peter makes notes on the proposals and positions of trustees by their statements. Peter seldom looks at the trustee speaking. He glances occasionally but seldom for more that five seconds in duration. In one five minute period, in which four trustees spoke, Peter glanced at the speaker eighteen times and looked for more than a count of five seconds only eleven times. The rest of the time he looked down or elsewhere in the room.

10:54 A motion by a trustee causes Peter to suggest a wording change. "May I suggest that it should read...." The suggestion is quickly accepted.

10: 57 Peter adds clarification: "That should state forty-five not fifty-four."

10:59 Peter gives a definition of a term used in a report in response to a trustee question.

11:01 Peter moves to the presenter's table to make his public Superintendent's report. His report was substantially the same as during the in camera report with the following additions:

- makes Board aware of progress on some items in the Division and Strategic Plan. "We have installed the new lab in ____ School. ---- Our Workshop Session to plan for next year is on May 18 and 19."
- clarifies Principal's position on a publicly raised concern about attendance policy at one of the High Schools. "Mr. ____ and his

staff are proceeding with further refinements of the policy and are presenting it to the SAC and he'll bring it to the Board at a future meeting."

- Peter thanks the Assistant Superintendents and their staffs for the work done on the budget.
- Peter responds to a trustee who had raised a point yesterday regarding the annual report. Peter had given a public answer. Peter said: "I had forgotten to include this in the report and I apologize to the Board for not mentioning it." Peter then goes on to state that "The annual report was prepared and distributed by the Treasurer and we all owe him thanks for this excellent work."

He does not mention the sources of information item or the sensitive situation at the elementary school.

11:12 Peter sits down at the front. The Chair makes a statement that he confirms: "That's right. You have to have the recommendation of the Board to the School Board Association by noon today."

11:14 Peter leaves the room.

11:15 Peter's secretary comes in looking for him.

11:16 Peter returns. His secretary follows him with a message and Peter leaves to take the call.

11:29 Peter returns and checks state of the motion with the Board Secretary on the way to his seat. There has been little progress.

11:33 Peter gestures for recognition of the chair. He strongly attempts to bring the debate to an end by saying: "Please stop going round and round. We have other fish to fry today!"

The debate continues for a few minutes before the chair calls for a vote.

11:45 The trustee reports begin. After one report where the trustee could not answer a question, Peter asks, "Could we get an explanation and send it to the trustees later?" His voice is tight and blunt.

11:46 Peter says (sotto voce) "Get on with it." He speaks loudly enough for me to hear from about 10 feet away.

11:52 Peter, in answering a question about a consultant's report, does not follow the normal procedure of answering the question in the form "Madame Chair through to ..." but says: "This is what the report stated. You can't read into it more than that."

11:57 Peter states, in regard to a question about goals, "I'm bringing in a recommendation for the development of goals for the next year."

Trustee Harry interrupts and Peter glares at him and says "What now!"

Harry: "Do we not want to get involved in developing these now?" Peter replies, "When it's brought out you can add, amend, and delete to your 'little heart's content'." Peter's tone was quite brusque in this exchange.

11:59 Trustee Tom requests review of the policy on Principal appointments and the involvement of the Board. Peter has no reaction but to stonily stare into the distance. This is an area he has made very much his prerogative.

12:00 Meeting adjourned for lunch. Peter and the Associate Superintendents discuss the morning's progress. Peter says: "The chair has no control. I know he's frustrated." As the discussion continued

another comment from Peter in the same vein: "It (the disorganization) just ticks me right off."

12:35 Peter speaks with the Personnel Associate on way back to office regarding the timing for the teaching assignment notices to schools for their budgets. Peter gives his approval for the personnel office to go ahead.

12:40 Peter is back in his office. He looks through the messages to see if anything is critical. A query from a Principal regarding an invitation to visit elicits an E-mail acceptance.

12:50 Peter leaves to go to the Post Office to mail his tax forms and have a walk outside.

1:00 Peter is back to the office. He checks with presenter of the ECS proposal for the afternoon "Is everything lined up? Good luck." Walks back into office and sighs "Ah ----!" looking at his desk where his secretary has placed a stack of materials.

1:05 Peter goes into the Board Room. It is beginning to fill with parents and children for the ECS presentation. This is the largest public representation at any Board meeting I attend.

1:05-1:10 Peter has quick discussions with trustees and side discussions. Everyone is very aware of the people in attendance.

1:10 Peter takes his seat with a coffee. Trustee Harry has a motion still to come forward with amendments. Peter advises him of the alternatives. The one Peter favors is for him to quickly withdraw it. He says: "You can still bring it forward later."

1:15 The meeting is called to order. Chair welcomes the parent delegation. Peter watches them closely and then removes his jacket (the room is very warm).

Presenters are critical of the processes used by the Board to gather information and the delegation definitely wishes to have increased hours of instruction in ECS. Trustees begin to question the presenters for clarification.

1:26 Peter leaves his seat and asks the Board secretary when the next scheduled Board meeting is and then returns to his seat.

1:27 Peter is attentive to the Trustees questions of the delegation but makes no notes.

1:35 Peter looks bored and frustrated. Trustee Harry is beginning to debate and the Chair is not acting. Peter writes a note and passes it to a trustee on his way out.

1:37 Peter returns to the meeting and takes his seat. Continues to listen.

1:50 Staff begin their presentation on the ECS proposal. Peter listens.

2:10 Peter still attentive but not involved. Trustees question the presentation and make statements regarding the issue.

2:16 Peter attempts to interject but is not recognized by the chair. He does not pursue recognition.

2:18 Trustee Harry puts forward the idea of a half year, two hundred hour program beginning in February. Peter strongly states: "This will present tremendous difficulty for staffing and facilities. This is a solution that is not acceptable." Harry does not like the answer and glares at Peter but says nothing.

2:20 The room is still physically uncomfortable and the chair calls for a break. Most of the parents have left.

2:20-2:25 Peter and the three Associates have a flurry of discussions over the progress being made or not made. Peter indicates: "They'll leave it to another meeting."

2:25-2:29 Peter goes back to his office and makes three phone calls.

2:30 Peter returns to the Board room and has a social chat with the Principal observing the meeting.

2:45-3:05 The meeting called back to order. Peter doodles and makes notes-- his face indicates frustration and unhappiness with the proceedings.

3:05 Trustee Harry directs a question to Peter: "Yesterday I gave you facts and figures about the budget and the fact that we were told that we had no money for staff and other things but now we are told there is money for double the hours. Which is it?"

Peter replies: "The original budget document was prepared with the parameters you set. You can find the money for the project and remain within the parameters. It means changing the parameters to 400 hours as you directed." ("You" means the Board.)

Harry: "Are we changing the document?"

Peter: "Not without the parameters. Parameters you set!"

Chair asks for further questions regarding the Administration proposal to change the budget to allow for increased hours.

Peter responds: "The budget parameters the Board set still allow for the increased hours or $640,000."

Peter then went into detail to explain: "The Budget is developed with the board parameters and that money can be moved within the budget as long as the bottom line is not changed. If the total amount of revenue changes, increased fees, for example, there is the possibility of adding to various projects in the budget."

3:16 Trustee Tom speaks to the audience about the importance of ECS. Peter says (sotto voce): "Spare me" and looks at the ceiling.

3:18 A trustee asks for Peter's comments on whether they should have only a one year commitment to ECS or have two. Peter says: "I favor a two year commitment for funding to allow for better planning. I have a real difficulty with one."

3:19 Trustee puts forward a proposal to use the reserves for ECS. Peter rises to his feet and says: "We are doing this because it is important and are supporting it but we will continue to lobby for full funding by the government. We can't use our reserves up to pay for something the government should pay for."

Chair asks about the February motion for only two hundred hours. Peter's recommendation: "I suggest that you rescind the motion. It would be the best way to clear it up."

3:21 The Reeve, Dick, begins making a speech in favor of user fees for transportation. He uses some figures to support his position. Peter leaves his seat to speak with one of the Assistant Superintendents about the information. "Where did he get those numbers? I don't think they're right." Peter then moves to the presenter's table to answer. He is not recognized by the Chair and backs away in frustration. Peter looks at

the ceiling as the Reeve goes on with his speech. After two minutes Peter interjects and corrects the figures the Reeve is using.

3:25 Dick finishes and Peter rises to clarify the position regarding the budget. "A change in the fees impacts the user fees. Fees like this also go against the principles of public education supported by the society but that is another debate."

3:35 Peter moves out of his chair and sits with me and the Associate Superintendent (Planning). They discuss the direction of the proceedings so far. "This is taking too long over a minor issue." Peter's final comment before going back to his seat is: "They're going into dangerous territory here, but they'll vote for four hundred hours and be the most popular people in town."

3:40 A break is called and some of the trustees and Administration move into the coffee room. Initially there is only one trustee and one councilor present. One asks Peter if he feels the Board will finish its agenda for the Budget tomorrow.

Peter replies: "There are only two issues outstanding and Harry's motion will take care of those."

Trustee: "Do you really think he's finished?"

Peter: "It's up to someone to tell him he is."

Trustee: "Are you prepared to?"

Peter: "I will if necessary."

At this point another trustee comes in and angrily speaks to the councilor for a comment he made earlier. Peter slips out of the room and returns to the Board room.

3:50 The meeting is called back to order. The Assistant Superintendent (Personnel) comes in. Peter moves to the side to speak with him. He suggests that Peter better meet with the classified staff about an early retirement offer administration had made to them. "They beat --------- up pretty badly when he met with them. Maybe you could smooth out the ruffled feathers." Peter agrees. "See if you can set it up for tomorrow afternoon." Peter returns to his chair.

3:55 Many trustees are asking to have the budget concluded on Monday at another meeting. Peter moves to the presenters table. He states: "What's wrong with today?" Peter then muses about the alternatives. "You can finish today as there is only one major issue left, transportation fees, or you can accept the proposal from yesterday for across the board fees to pay for ECS. It's up to you."

3:57 Peter then moves to sit behind the presenter's table in the gallery.

The Board goes into a fifteen minute wrangle over procedure, process, and timing for another meeting. Some members cannot be at a meeting on Monday and resist the change. Peter moves back to his chair after approximately ten minutes have elapsed.

4:14 Peter is asked by one of the trustees, who cannot be at a meeting Monday, if the budget can be referred to the next regular Board meeting two weeks away. Peter asks "Then when is the budget going to be approved? I'm in a quandary over many matters if it is left much longer."

4:15 Chair asks Peter "If we...." and stops. He admits he is confused. Other trustees continue to debate the alternatives.

4:20 Peter (quite frustrated) asks: "When are you going to deliver the budget? <u>When</u>?!!!

4:21 The Assistant Superintendent in charge of contract negotiations approaches Peter and tells him that the negotiating meeting scheduled for Monday afternoon will not likely go into the evening. This had been a trouble point with some trustees on the committee.

4:23 Peter informs the Board of this meeting change and appeals to the Board to go to Monday night. "Please, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have to get this done as soon as possible."

4:25. Harry asks Peter, "What to do I do with my motion which is still on the table?" This motion was getting lost as the procedural hassles continued. "Either vote on it or withdraw it." is his answer.

4:31 Peter looks tired, frustrated, and bored as he plays with his pencil, doodles, looks at the ceiling, and out across the room.

4:35 A motion to have a budget meeting on Monday passes. A trustee asks if they have to finalize the Budget on Monday Peter loudly says: "Why are you having the meeting if not to finalize the Budget?"

4:36 Peter moves to sit at the side of the room with the assistant superintendents.

4:40 One of the assistant superintendents asks Peter if he thinks the budget will pass on Monday. Peter: "I wouldn't bet on it." He returns to his seat.

4:41 Peter is asked for a recommendation regarding a motion the Board just passed. He replies "Was that passed?"

Chair replies: "Do you have a problem with it?" Peter: "I do but it's passed!" He tosses down his pen onto the desk.

4:43 One of the councilors passes a note to Peter. He shared this with me later. It said "If the Minister was watching this he'd dissolve the Board."

4:45 to 6:15 The Board goes through the resolutions still on the agenda. There is still some procedural problems but they are tired and the process goes fairly smoothly. Peter remains at his chair for the entire time. He doodles, makes notes but never takes part in the deliberations. Much of the debate (32 minutes) is about a motion to call for proposals for an auditing firm for the annual audit. Peter comments to me afterwards: "Only this group could debate that."

6:15 Adjournment. Peter goes quickly to his office and speaks to no one.

6:16 Peter enters his office and looks at his desk. "I should lock my office to keep this crap out," referring to the memos and material placed on his desk. E-mails one reply to a message and leaves for home.